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TORONTO

MUSIC AND NATIONALISM

A STUDY OF ENGLISH OPERA

BY

CECIL FORSYTH

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PREFACE

To those who are familiar with the broad paths of Musical History, and more particularly with that narrow byway, English Opera, this book may seem to call, perhaps not for an apology, but at any rate for an explanation. So far as I am aware, no book has been wholly devoted either to giving an account of the forces which have influenced the Musical Stage in England, or even to drawing up that catalogue of Operatic names, dates, and places which, with a few personal likes and dislikes, generally does duty in this country for a serious æsthetic.

It is as a first attempt to fill the former gap that this book has been written. My original intention was merely to mark what I may call the high and low-water marks of our English Operatic activity. But, in trying to bring them into some sort of co-ordination with our other national activities, so many difficulties arose, so many perplexing and apparently inexplicable phenomena came to light, that I was compelled to go outside the narrow limits which I had set myself and to study the more general relationships of National life and Musical Productivity.

I must, therefore, offer my readers this explanation for presenting to them what is really two

books in one; first, a study of the relationship between Nationalism and Music—that is to say, a study of the deterring and fostering influences which a nation is able to exert on its composers—and next, a more particularized account of the manner in which the deterrent forces have affected the production of Opera in England. To these I have added chapters dealing with the artistic and social conditions of our native composers and executants. These conditions, which are matters of painful daily experience to English musicians, are, I think, little known to the public, and even among musicians the consciousness of their pressure has only come in recent years. I make no apology for the frank discussion of these topics, as it is prompted only by a sincere belief in my fellow-composers and a very earnest hope for the future of English Opera.

On one point I take pride in laying claim to some originality,—for I suppose I may say, without fear of contradiction, that I am one of the few living beings who have not only talked of but actually *read the works of the poet Bunn.*

I cannot end this preface without expressing my thanks to my friend, Mr. Alleyne Ireland, whose life-long study of colonial expansion and administration gives him a unique authority on many questions to which I have alluded in my first three chapters. The suggestion that the key of Musical History might be found in Sea-Power came originally from him, and, though I think that explanation can only be maintained with regard to the Modern Period, it nevertheless gave me a hint. The key, so to speak, only needed filing down to a skeleton in order to run smoothly in

the lock. I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness on this point.

To Mr. Arthur I. Ellis, of the British Museum, I also wish to offer my thanks for much kind help extended to me when trudging along the dusty roads of eighteenth century theatrical-pamphlet literature.

CECIL FORSYTH.

LONDON, *September*, 1911.

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Mr. Chadband: "Can we fly, my friends? We cannot. Why can we not fly, my friends?" Mr. Snagsby ventures to observe in a cheerful and rather knowing tone, "No wings," but is immediately frowned down by Mrs. Snagsby.

CHARLES DICKENS, *Bleak House.*

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

THE history of English Opera begins nearly 250 years ago.

It is a history of which we have no great reason to be proud, for its most permanent characteristic is an inability to express either the strength or the purpose of our race. It is, in fact, a history of hesitation, of intermittent effort, and of acknowledged failure: and it is therefore well worth study, because failure demands a philosophy by which to explain itself, while success calls only for a chronology of praise. We must, however, remember that neither music in general nor the special form of music which we are discussing—Opera—can be profitably studied as an isolated mental activity detached from every other form of human endeavour. The attempt to regard composers as writing, so to speak, in a hermetically sealed vacuum free from outside pressure must result, and actually does result, in a history whose details may themselves be accurate, but which are none the less inexplicable in their relationships to each other. In order to construct a philosophy which will explain and harmonize these details it is therefore necessary to contrast our activity in this one direction with all those other activities, artistic, social, commercial, and

political, which make up the sum of our national inheritance.

Beginning, then, with the days of the Second Charles, we find that in 250 years England has produced a countless and glorious host of great men. There has been scarcely any emergency in her history in which she has not been able, by an almost incredible magic, to embody in some one or other of her sons that quality of noble persistency which characterizes the race. Great poets and painters: scholars and divines: soldiers, engineers, and students of nature: the greatest sailor of all time: pioneers, administrators, and statesmen: they pass in a long and illustrious line, and, in passing, have exalted the English name and changed their tiny island-home into a World-Power greater than any since the days of the Roman Empire.

In music alone, and especially in Operatic music, England has failed. A scholar may, indeed, count to her credit a solitary artistic figure[1] whose genius illuminated the first days of her Operatic history, but his name and his works are now almost as little in her memory as that of the builder of Stonehenge. Nor, of all the works written since his death, can we reckon more than two which she still hears with pleasure; and, when we qualify our reckoning by the consideration that these two works,[2] in their threadbare poverty, now excite only her languid attention, we may safely say that no single English Opera exists in which the English people recognize any full expression of themselves, of their aspirations, or of their national genius.

[1] Henry Purcell.

[2] The British Museum catalogue has 144 entries under the title "Bohemian Girl" and 123 under that of "Maritana."

The contrast between this enormous and many-sided output of energy on the one hand and apparent barrenness on the other seems, at first sight, inexplicable; but it is essential to a proper understanding of the question that we should view it as a contrast of *results* only. For, if we compare the *amount* of activity expended in any one field of national endeavour with that expended on Opera we shall be forced to the conclusion that the difference is not very great. It is true that such a country as Italy has produced a much greater quantity of Opera than England, but, as I shall show, this was due to the fact that Opera was sustained in Italy by the whole consciousness of the people. In England the national mind was split up, under the stress of adverse exterior conditions, into three distinct currents, and of these only one flowed—perhaps I should say trickled—in the direction of national Opera. Only one third of the national energy available for music—and that the poorest in point of material wealth—was, therefore, free to exercise itself in the production of national Opera; and, as we shall see, that third attempted again and again the most difficult of all tasks—the overthrow of a foreign art-form supported by a native caste, and the substitution of another which should be truly national, and therefore satisfactory.

Making this allowance, then, we may return to our comparison and admit the expenditure in England of considerable energy on both sides. If, however, we turn to the *results* of this energy, we see at once a striking difference, and it is therefore all the more important for us to enquire into the conditions under which the energy was applied, for without such an enquiry our history must remain a mere catalogue of dates and personal preferences. Into these con-

ditions I intend to go somewhat closely in the following pages, but for my present purpose I only wish to draw attention to two points in which the purely musical differ from all the other national activities.

In the first place, we find a violent contrast in the actual *quality* of brain- and will-power employed in the two cases. It needs no more than a moment's effort to recall the names of the most distinguished Englishmen—other than musicians—of any generation, and then to contrast their personality, and consequently their achievements, with the personality and achievements of the contemporary English composers. This melancholy comparison may be profitably extended to the labours of those undistinguished gentlemen who, for the first 200 years of our Operatic history, were unfortunately always at hand to supply our composers with their necessary literary material—and the comparison will inevitably lead to the same result. On the one hand, among the English poets, painters, statesmen, sailors, explorers, administrators, and so on, we find men whose iron will, far-seeing wisdom, and incarnate imagination, place them above and in front of their European contemporaries : on the other, we see the ranks of the Operatic composers and Dramatic poets filled by a strange flabby-minded race of dummies, whose almost unearthly want of courage and imagination condemns them irrevocably to a place behind and beneath their own generation. The dismal details of their lives at present do duty for English Operatic History, but they are really only of interest when, massed together, they give us a clue by which to explain that history.

There is a second point in which we can note a difference between the working of the musical and the national mind. If we take any long-continued

line of activity—other than music—we have no difficulty in tracing through that line a distinct *connectedness* of effort. One generation takes up the burden laid down by a former generation, but takes it up strengthened and inspired by the ideals and successes of its predecessors. In the material operations of manu-facture and machinery-facture this *connectedness* is, of course, the first essential to progress. But it is by no means confined, as an intrinsic factor of success, to material things. We can trace it in the gradual, slow process by which we have built up a complex and varying system of colonial and Asiatic administration. We can trace it in the evolution of our naval methods. We can trace it in our language and its forms as developed by our poets and prose-writers. Finally, lest it should be suggested that music alone is outside the pale of natural law, we can trace it in all the great continental schools of Operatic composition.

In English music, and especially in English Opera, we can find no trace of this "connectedness of thought." We have indeed our purple—or at any rate our dull mauve—patches, but on examination these prove to be, not the well-chosen ornaments of a beautiful garment, but only the decorations of Tom Fool his jacket. Purcell, Arne, Bishop, Wallace, Barnett, to name only a few, wrote successful operas. But these men do not form a school, and no one of them had an artistic successor in any but a purely chronological sense. Each man, labouring under impossible artistic conditions, started afresh, often in the hope of founding a national school. But the conditions in every case forbade progress, and the consequence is that the groups of Operas, which form the so-called "English School," are as isolated and

inexplicable to a layman as the rows of specimens in a geological museum.

Before leaving this aspect of the historical problem I must point out that this disconnectedness cannot possibly be a negligible "chance" or "sport" in our artistic record. It is too persistent and unvarying to leave us that easy explanation. As a matter of fact, it is bound up with the national history, and is at once an illustration and a result of our national conditions. To these matters I shall presently make fuller reference, but meanwhile, if the reader has a clear idea of the strange differences that lie between our musical and our other national activities, he may be expected to turn to our Operatic History and ask the question—"Why?"[1] Unfortunately, the Muse of Operatic History has very little of solid to answer to this question, she being for the most part engaged in politely discreet descriptions of Opera-plots which

[1] There is no difficulty in gathering from our histories the causes of individual Operatic failures. Among such causes we find "the interference of a certain class of critics," "the unfortunate conditions of English Opera," and even "the size of the stage"; but all such reasons are merely "proximate," and help us very little when we come to study the question why the nation at large has not been able to develop a national school of Opera. See the very inconclusive reasoning on this point in Grove's *Dictionary* (1st ed. vol. iii. p. 291), where it is assumed that it was possible for Handel to found an English School by producing Italian and German works before an English audience, and that the School died out partly because Arne and his contemporaries were not such great men as Handel, and partly because Storace, Dibdin, Hook, and Shield, showed an "almost total absence of dramatic power"! Elsewhere the English failure to build on Purcell's foundation is merely chronicled almost as if it were self-explanatory (Purcell's work "was not successfully followed up," Grove, ii. p. 523), or the trouble is put down to that well-known musical whipping-horse "Handel's powerful personality" (Markham Lee, *The Story of Opera*, p. 91).

she occasionally condescends to embellish with portraits of stout, middle-aged sopranos and wiggy-looking tenors.

On this point I think we have a fair grievance against her, for, if not actually careless, she is without doubt lazy and superficial. Indeed, her frivolous manner of answering our question "Why?" would not be tolerated were it applied to the solution of any other important problem. There are a thousand and one such questions to which men expect (and receive) reasonable philosophical answers. If they ask why there are alkali works at Widnes and none at Dorking, it is not sufficient to reply that the people of Dorking have no enthusiasm for soap. They must be shown that Widnes lies midway between two areas of coal and salt, and that therefore, unlike Dorking, she has a plentiful and cheap supply of the two special raw-stuffs which are essential to alkali manufacture. If, again, they ask why the Isle of Wight apparently fits into the mainland and yet is not joined to it, they will not be satisfied unless they are taken to Lulworth Cove and there shown the same physical causes producing the same results to-day in Dorsetshire as they produced ages ago in Hampshire,—the water eating out the band of soft stone to the north and isolating the southern band of hard rock. These are but two examples taken at random, and I have purposely refrained from citing instances of cause and effect in art; but it must be remembered that all artistic questions depend, in the long run, for their answers on exactly similar factors, racial, climatic, and geographical; and indeed receive their answers in every department but that of music, not by an unintelligible string of dates, but by a deduction from these very factors.

The special question, then, which I wish to ask is

this—"Why have the English people never been able to develop a school of National Opera?" Now, it is quite obvious that, in answering this question, we are not merely faced by the necessity of explaining a natural or acquired distaste for the theatre. The Englishman, and especially the Londoner, has always been an enthusiastic theatre-goer, and, in the course of his enthusiasm, has managed to produce the greatest of all tragic poets. Nor can we charge him with any particular distaste for Opera. He has indeed shown a deep-rooted and healthy dislike of Opera as evolved abroad, but, as I have already remarked, that has not prevented him making continual efforts to produce a type of Opera better suited to his own tastes. We can, then, admit no general or particular dislike of the theatre, and it is therefore necessary for us to go behind this question altogether and, leaving Opera out of account for the time, endeavour to obtain a view of the reasons which have prevented or furthered the rise of the European "Schools of Music."

But it is just when we come to study this question from the general musical point of view, as opposed to the purely Operatic, that we find the Muse almost as helpless as she was before. For, if we call on her to justify her existence by her philosophy, we find her only too ready—it is true—to take up her scroll and recite to us, but her recitation is not what we hoped for: is indeed no more than a bewildering catalogue of "Schools of Composition," each one of which seems to pop up in its place like a conjurer's puppet, utter its weird little screech, and then disappear into the basket without apparent rhyme or reason.

These "Polyphonic, Monodic, Dramatic, and Instrumental" Schools of Composition are arranged

by Mr. W. S. Rockstro[1] under 35 "leading divisions," of which 29 occupy the years from 1370 to 1800, 5 the nineteenth century, and 1 "the future." Missing out the last-named, then, we have 34 small circles of activity, so to speak, whose existence calls for explanation.

Now, if we separate any one of these "circles" for examination, we shall have no difficulty in tracing within its limits a regular organic process of development. One composer produces his work and dies. A second succeeds him under similar, but possibly more advanced, conditions. He builds up a structure on the foundations laid by his predecessor and leaves behind him either an unfinished fabric which his successors complete, or a fabric so perfect[2] that any additions are mechanically impossible: new plans have then to be drawn, and a new foundation laid. Occasionally, though not often, we find that two or more of the circles intersect: the schools of one country or of one age influence the schools of a neighbouring country or of another age. None of these questions, however, offers the student any points of serious difficulty or perplexity. They are indeed no more than the hackwork of history, and their problems are to be solved by a compilation of dates and a perusal of composers' works.

It is only when we step back and place ourselves, as it were, outside the complete pattern of circles that the difficulty begins: for the question is no longer *How* a certain school developed within its own limits, but *Why* it suddenly sprang into existence, *Why* it

[1] "Schools of Composition," in Grove's *Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. iii. p. 258.

[2] *E.g.* The sixteenth century polyphonic school and the developed contrapuntal school of Bach.

continued to exist, and *Why* it suddenly ceased to exist? The reader will easily be able to put such questions as these into concrete form. He may ask —and probably often has asked—why it is that from 1370 to 1520 the music of Europe was developed solely by the inconsiderable people of an inconsiderable state,—Flanders, and why its composers (almost without exception) recognized it as an essential preliminary to their artistic life that they should leave their native country and, after a perilous journey, take up their residence many hundreds of miles away in Rome: he may ask why it is that the English, with their immense reserve of material, mental, and moral energy, have achieved so little in the past 250 years; while the Germans, with a very similar national "stock-in-trade" have achieved so much; he may ask why it was that the Spaniard conquered the Italian in art until he happened to conquer him politically, and why, at that precise moment, he ceased to be his artistic superior.

The reader may well employ half an hour in considering the possibility of a satisfactory answer to these questions. Meanwhile let us at least pay the Muse of History the courtesy of an interrogatory visit to her shrine; she may have something to tell us. Indeed she has; unhappily, however, her mental equipment, long devoted to answering the question, "How?" works somewhat rustily when we pose her the more difficult question "Why?"

Her answer, as nearly as I can piece it together from many scattered utterances, generally takes one of three forms.

(1) We may be informed that at such and such a time, and in such and such a country there was "a great artistic awakening." This answer—a favourite

one with her, as it lends itself to florid detail—seems, however, on consideration to be no more than an affirmative re-statement of our question. It is as if we had enquired why many herrings are to be found on the "Dogger Bank" and none in the "Norway Deep," and were told that it is because quantities of these fish exist in the former place and none in the latter.

(2) Next we may be answered by the statement of some trivial circumstance or "cause," such as the existence of a certain amount of wealth or leisure in such and such a place, or of a certain fine church or theatre adapted to the singing of masses or operas. But here again on a close examination we shall always be forced to conclude either that the cause is merely "proximate" or that perhaps it is not even a "proximate cause," but only a circumstance. It may indeed —as in the case of material prosperity—partially govern the development of the artistic impulse, or it may—as in the case of opera houses, orchestras, and so on—be the direct result of that impulse; but in neither case does it explain the impulse; and we have only to form an easy parallel to each case—a parallel in which the same material circumstances did *not* produce any artistic development, to see the fallacy of the logic.

With the limited space at my disposal for this preliminary study I must leave it to the reader to frame these parallels for himself, only assuring him that he will find no case in which it is impossible. As an example of the (apparently) ideal material conditions for the production of a National School he may study the position of Rome down to the early part of the sixteenth century, and notice that, despite these conditions, her music was the creation

of resident foreigners. It would be difficult to make a complete list of all the "proximate causes" which have been suggested to account for the development or non-development of Music, but I cannot omit to mention the commonest of all,—the personal predilections of Kings and Princes. For when we ask our question, "Why?" we often receive some such answer as that "Philip of Burgundy was a great patron of the arts," that "King Charles the Second liked French Music," or that "the Dukes of Chandos and Devonshire joined George the First in his appreciation of Handel."[1] These answers, of course, tell us nothing, for, though a Prince may be a great and patriotic ruler, or the reverse, he has no more power to change the hearts and minds of his subjects than the colour of their skins or the shape of their heads. If they beget the activity he may help or retard its birth and development; but that is all he can do. Indeed, the wisdom or unwisdom of Princes interests us only in the individual biographies of artists. In the general philosophy of races and of the men whom these races produce to illustrate themselves, only those few Princes count who sum up in themselves the expression of their people. Even then the Prince is no more than the picture or symbol of his people's aspirations: one cannot explain Pheidias by Pericles,

[1] "It has been the misfortune of English music to suffer more than once from political events. The violent interruptions caused by the Reformation and the Great Rebellion were as disastrous in their effects upon later schools of English music as were the Wars of the Roses upon the School of Dunstable. More peaceably, but no less unfortunately, the advent of the Hanoverian dynasty, with its German court and Italian opera, crushed the school of English opera which Purcell founded" (Grove's *Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. iv. p. 620, *sub* "Dunstable").

Shakespeare by Elizabeth Tudor, or Wagner by Ludwig of Bavaria.

(3) The third answer which we are liable to get to our query generally takes a form with which we are painfully familiar in this country. It is that such and such a race is or is not "musical." Now this answer, involving as it does a charge of deficient mentality against large numbers of people, is of much greater interest than either of the other answers and calls for closer examination. To the Englishman who has had to face this charge time out of mind the point assumes an exaggerated importance: indeed, it is almost ludicrous to observe his dumbfoundedness when found guilty on the sworn statement that he does not (often) produce composers. He is too much of a simpleton to protest that this evidence is inadmissible: he is sentenced, and has nothing with which to console himself but the knowledge of his own innocence. *Solvitur ridendo.*

We may, however, without holding any brief for the Englishman, ask ourselves these questions: First, is it possible to prove the charge of "not being musical" against a nation? Again, is it possible to assert that one nation is "more musical" than another? In both cases the answer is a plain "No." The folk-song of the Russian moujik is no better and no worse than that of the Greek fisherman: the Italian wine-presser has his tune, and it stands on equal terms with that of the Somerset farmer: the Irishman may put into his song the wild poetry of his rocky north-west coast, the tenderness of his purple hillsides, and the sudden awe of a glimpse across his lakes into the unseen world that lies beyond, but it is neither greater

nor less great than the uplifting religious song of the German peasant. Add to these what names you will, Scandinavian, Spanish, Scottish, even Persian and Hindu; mix and compare them as you like; and the utmost of difference will be this,—that in some cases the gleaners have come late into the field, and consequently their gatherings are scanty; and this, too,—that there may be some difference of the thing expressed, some difference of mountain and plain, of sea-coast and upland, of vine and heather, of sun-baked or waterlogged atmosphere. But we cannot (without blasphemy to the Giver of all things) place in a scale either these differences of nature or the corresponding differences which they produce in man.

In a word, wherever there is a ray of sunlight to strike the ground and a human being to look for his existence to these two things, we shall find the same force at work and the same deep-seated want crying out for satisfaction, and the result of both is SONG.

But, this being so, does it not follow that all nations are equally musical? There can be only one answer to this question. They are all equally musical. How, then, are we to explain the undoubted fact that they are not all equally *productive* and equally *developed*? Why is it that one nation suddenly flares up into artistic brilliance, and then flickers back into darkness, while its neighbour is all the time moving in a twilight that seems to grow neither darker nor brighter? Mere material prosperity cannot explain this contrast, nor can the advance of national art correspond alone with the advance of national prosperity.[1] If it did, we should

[1] It must be remembered that music, unlike some other arts, does not depend in the last resort on any very expensive or exceptional material processes. A shilling's worth of wood can

expect to find a national musical awakening in Italy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the United States of America of the nineteenth century, and these are just the cases where we do not find it.

There must surely be some factor or factors here which we have not hitherto observed. Before we search for this factor we must ask ourselves whether the difference between a nation's "musicality" and its "musical productiveness" is a difference, not of degree, but of kind. Can it be that the two do not, as it were, march arm in arm, but that the one lies deeper and prior to the other? Can it be that the former is always present as a fundamental characteristic of humanity, and that it depends for its transmutation into the latter, not on the petty chances of exterior circumstance, not on the likes and dislikes of Princes, not on the size and suitability of houses, not on the tastes and distastes of critics, but on some force which governs a nation's activity, and which itself depends for its existence or non-existence (as all other national forces depend) on simple differences of race, of climate, and of geographical position?

Let us see. Our main object is to obtain an answer to the question, "Why have the English people never been able to develop a school of national opera?" In order to do that we have had to go outside the question and indicate a still larger question, "Why does one nation develop musically,

be made up into a playable violin; and even in the case of a complex instrument, such as the modern piano, the material is easily come by in almost every country in the world, and is used in quantities which would be regarded by many other workers in wood and metal as minute.

while another remains musically undeveloped?" A solution of the latter question will probably give us a key to the former.

Let us then turn to our bewildering list of "Schools of Composition," and endeavour, in the fewest possible words, to describe what has actually happened in Europe since the days of William the Conqueror. In doing this we may perhaps discover the nature of the factor which has at any time prevented a nation —that is to say, a normally musical nation—from developing into an artistically productive nation. In tabulating these facts I, of course, confine myself solely to what is matter of undisputed history. The reader must remember, however, that I am dealing only with the broadest and most comprehensive phases of national activity. In such cases the effect of a force does not become visible until long after its first application;[1] and the same force seems to persist perhaps for years after its vitality has ceased.[2] The precise dates of individual art-works, and even the lives of those isolated composers[3] who do not exist as links in a school, are therefore almost valueless as the basis for an argument.

(1) There is good manuscript evidence to show that, from the beginning of the eleventh to the beginning of the fifteenth century the most advanced and technically perfect music in Europe was English.[4]

[1] *E.g.* German Opera as based on Italian.

[2] *E.g.* The "Polyphonic" school of Italy, which continued to decay in public long after 1600.

[3] *E.g.* Purcell.

[4] *E.g.* the Winchester "Troparium" now in the Bodleian at Oxford (date, *circa* 1000); the MS. in the Harleian collection at the British Museum containing two 3-part Antiphons, one 4-part

(2) About the end of the fourteenth century the Flemings took up the development of music, and continued it unaided to the last half of the sixteenth. These Flemings advanced and perfected their school principally in Rome. Only one great Italian figures in this movement, and he appears almost as an accidental, if culminating, force at the extreme end of the period.

(Elsewhere in Europe the influence of the Flemings is felt. Under their direct inspiration, music is produced in such places as Venice, Florence, Naples, Bologna, France, and England. In the latter place alone is there any even imperfect approach to the foundation of a national school.)

(3) Spain is the only other nation to join with Italy in perfecting the Flemish School. The Spanish composers work not in Spain but in Rome.

(4) The northern (sea-board) Dutch and the Portuguese produce nothing.

In 1600 the character of musical composition is suddenly changed by the Italians. From that time forward

(5) The English and Spanish peoples join the Dutch and Portuguese in producing no musical development. (In all these countries

Antiphon, and the celebrated "Rota," "Sumer is icumen in" (the last probably written in the Abbey of Reading, Berkshire, between 1200 and 1250); the so-called "Chaucer" MS. in the Arundel Collection at the British Museum, containing the hymn "Quen of euene for y^{e} blisse," and "Salve virgo virginum"; the (thirteenth century) MS. of "Secular Songs" in the Vatican Library and the MS. at Bologna, each containing vocal works by Dunstable and his English contemporaries (early fifteenth century).

foreign music continues to be performed and admired.)

(6) Florence, Venice, Mantua, and Naples, become the "live-axle" of the musical world.

(7) A number of (often small and isolated) towns and states of the (present) German and Austrian Empires produce in Central and Eastern Europe a purely Teutonic school of music. (This school has its first momentum from Italy, but, when once it is started, it owes its development solely to German energies.)

(8) A French school is built up on similar Italian foundations. Unlike the German school, however, it is centred in one town—Paris—and is developed and guided at its critical moments not only by Frenchmen, but by acclimatized Germans and Italians.[1]

(9) A number of peoples (Russian, Scandinavian, and Finnish) begin to produce national music, generally under the initial influence of Germany. (This music is, especially in the case of Russia, so minute in quantity when compared with size of population as to be negligible.)

In these few sentences I have stated, in the broadest way possible, the facts of European musical history. If the reader is inclined to wonder at the breadth either of statement or of omission, he should reflect that some persons in every nation are at almost all times writing music, but that this universal activity is (more often than not) only a *formality* that exists as a kind of sub-conscious protest which a nation makes against its own prohibitive artistic conditions. A rigorous selection has therefore to be made, and the criterion by which we must make such

[1] *E.g.* Lulli, Gluck, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Offenbach, etc.

a selection can only be that of national mental progress. This is the sole way in which we can arrive at a satisfactory record of artistic development; but it must not be overlooked that individual art-works may have a value *to the nation which produces them* quite different from that which they have to the world at large. On this point, as it affects the special case of Opera in England, I shall dwell in a later chapter.

Now, if we take the above record of musical development and consider it as wholly detached from every other form of national and international activity, there is nothing that calls for explanation. Historians have gathered for us an enormous mass of easily-available material in which the flow of musical development is as plain as the course of the Thames from Battersea Bridge to Chelsea Hospital. It is only when we attempt to correlate the high and low tides of musical art with the ebb and flow of the other arts and of our general national life that we find ourselves faced by serious difficulties and contradictions. Music, however, is a faculty of the human mind whose exercise is governed by exactly the same conditions as the exercise of any other faculty—that is to say, that the outward conditions (of race, of geographical and political environment) bring the same pressure to bear on the exercise of the one faculty as on the exercise of the others. The question, then, remains to be asked whether the mind itself responds in the same way when working in a musical as in any other medium. In other words, we must ask ourselves whether, even with identical conditions, there is not some fundamental difference between musical and any other mental activity.

Our object must therefore be to examine the broad facts of musical history, as given above, in the

light of the equally broad facts of national history, so that we may be able to discover the "least-common-denominator" whose presence is the preventive factor in national musical productivity. We shall then be able to apply this knowledge to the special case of arrested musical development in England.

Now, it is quite plain that any such discovery is impossible unless we first ascertain whether an argument based on such an examination is equally applicable to music and to the other arts; for, if we find that musical activities proceed together, step by step, with the other activities, we can claim that identical causes and conditions have produced identical results. If, on the other hand, we find that the flowing tide and the high-water mark of development invariably differ as between music and the other arts, we shall be forced to explain this discrepancy by some fundamental difference in the mental processes required. In the latter case we should probably obtain a clue to help us in our search for what I have called "the least-common-denominator," and we should expect to find the perplexing and apparently causeless phenomena of musical history falling into their places as ordered parts of a logical development. I must, however, make it clear that, as I wish to apply the results of this investigation specially to English musical history, I am limiting myself more particularly to a study of the factor which *prevents* musical development, and am only incidentally considering those other factors which further its advance. It would, I think, be no more difficult to discover the latter than the former, but its full discussion is not possible outside the limits of a volume devoted to that purpose.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL AND ARTISTIC COMPARISONS

LET us begin by imagining a chronological chart of European history from the year 1000 to the present day.[1] On it we place three distinct sets of entries :

(1) Names of men, places, or events which serve as symbols of great national movements.

(2) Names which stand in a similar relationship to science, to manufacture, to literature, and to all the arts except music.

(3) The great representative names of music.

From such a chart two conclusions can be drawn without difficulty :

(1) The development of music has been *late* compared with every other sort of development, whether scientific, artistic, or political.

(2) National development has always marched with development in every form of art but music.

In the first conclusion I am not interested at the present moment, though it offers a tempting subject for speculation. Its proof can be seen in the enormous list of painters, sculptors, poets, explorers, statesmen,

[1] A chart of this sort, but confined to the contrast of "Music" with "Science, Literature, and the other Arts," is to be found at page 264 of Mr. Wallace's *The Threshold of Music*.

and so on, whose activities were developed and perfected before Haydn was born.

It is with the second conclusion that I wish to deal more explicitly here, and the most striking way in which we can enforce its lesson is to imagine what our history would be if music *did* actually coincide in its progress with the advance of nations and of their arts. To do this we must first lay aside our historical knowledge, and endeavour to fit music into the place which, *a priori*, we should suppose it ought to occupy. In this way we shall see how grotesquely false is our assumption.

Suppose, then, that we secure the services of some imaginary and detached being from Mars. We presuppose in him the power of reasoning, but not of distinguishing tongues; we hand over to him our chronological chart, having first erased from it all the musical names; we provide him with undated lists of the musical activities of Europe, and ask him to enter them in the chart on the supposition that musical development has always proceeded hand in hand with the development of the nation and of the other arts. We shall first have to inform him that, for some unknown reason, he must not begin his entries before 1000 A.D.; that, at the outset, all the European nations are equally musical and equally undeveloped; that the folk-song exists everywhere, but nothing else except perhaps here and there an echo in the Church of bygone days; that we must not attempt to enter anything against the great international outpouring of the Crusades, because, though on our hypothesis this must have produced a similar (and perhaps international) musical awakening, no such general European renaissance appears in his list of musical activities, and that, therefore, he must fill in the chart in this

place with a "?". What sort of history will he compile under these fantastic conditions? I take it that it might read something as follows:

(1) Between 1000 and 1300 the world-power is to the Papacy. It is in Rome, therefore, and not in England that the first feeble signs of musical life begin to show themselves. Honest John of Fornsete becomes an early Italian monk, and "Sumer is icumen in" an early Italian madrigal.

(2) Between 1265 and 1325 the great political and artistic awakening in Italy produces Dante, Giotto, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. She has, therefore, to take her opportunity of building up the first developed school of artistic music, and in doing this she produces Palestrina who dies about 200 years before he was born.

(3) The third period (from 1380 to 1500) is again in the hands of Italy, for it is between those dates that all the greatest Italian thinkers and artists were born. The list begins with Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Fra Angelico, and goes on through Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci to Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Ariosto, Titian, Raphael, and Benvenuto Cellini. This is, therefore, also the great period of Italian musical art. She founds Opera with Peri and Caccini, elaborates it with Monteverde, Cesti, and Cavalli, systematizes it with Scarlatti, and perhaps brings it to a culminating point with Lulli. Thus Opera reaches its first great climax about 100 years before its (actual) invention.

(The English, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Flemings, the Dutch, and the inhabitants

of the present German Empire take no part in either of these movements.)

(4) In 1492 America is discovered. The Mediterranean ceases to be *the* ocean and becomes *an* inland sea. Slowly but irresistibly the face of European civilization is altered. The eyes of the world begin to turn westward, and, as they turn, the relative importance of European nations begins to assume new and strange shapes. At once the burden of discovery and empire is taken up and controlled by the two most inconsiderable of western nations. Among the Latin peoples it is the most westerly only, the Spanish and the Portuguese, that join in the race for empire. The effect of the discovery does not begin to be felt till the last half of the sixteenth century. From that time onwards we can see its results in an enormous out-reaching both east and west, an awakening of discovery, of conquest, of trade, and of empire.

From about 1550, then, to the present day the musical activities of the world must be apportioned, not to the Germans, the French, and the Italians, to whom they rightfully belong, but to the Dutch, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and pre-eminently the English.

How exactly our "Man from Mars" would divide up these activities is matter rather of chance than of logic. Suffice it to say that every great name of modern European music must appear to the credit of one of the four countries which I have named, and that England's share in this, as in other things, must be the lion's share.

To the Portuguese perhaps would be given the honour of producing the first great composer of the modern world,—I suppose they would have called him Joao Bach: to the Dutch might fall his great contemporary Handel, with the whole of the early German school; while to the Spanish, who have set their mark on half a continent, would be allotted the whole of the modern Operatic school either of France or Italy. But it is England who, above all other nations, has profited by the discovery of 1492, and it is England who, since Elizabethan days, has most devoted herself to the aim of World-Empire. It is therefore England who must hand over her Sullivan to the Viennese, and take in exchange their Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven. Nor would these names offer a sufficiently brilliant illustration of her vast world-activity. She must lay hands on Weber, Wagner, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Brahms.

Germany and Austria (poor countries until recently far removed from the world-movement) have nothing left to them—unless, indeed, the former claims some small musical expression of her recent, and not very profitable, national extension in Africa. In that case the United Teutonic nations might be credited with "Maritana" and the musical accompaniments to "Peter Pan."

France, despite her brilliance, undoubtedly the least successful of empire-builders, would receive an almost exact illustration of her timid, vacillating colonial policy in our own

Operatic history from Arne to the present day.

Italy, for so long a confused jumble of warring states, could have nothing till her sudden political union in the nineteenth century—a union that might be symbolized by some such isolated genius as Henrico Purcell.

The modern Flemings—the Belgians—might be punished for their deeds in the Congo by the present of Balfe and the poet Bunn.

Here, then, we have a sketch of musical history drawn up on the assumption that national and musical activities coincide. I must lay stress on the fact that, however grotesque and ridiculous this sketch may appear to a reader with any historical knowledge, there is nothing *a priori* improbable about it. On the contrary it offers a fair statement of what, on our assumption, musical history ought to be, but actually is not. We must also remember that, if we had erased from our chart not only the musical names but all the entries except those of the great national world-movements, and had then handed to our "Man from Mars" undated lists of poets, painters, sculptors, students of nature, merchants, soldiers, sailors, explorers, administrators, and so on, he would have had no difficulty in entering these names on the chart so that they corresponded roughly with the actualities of history. I do not say, of course, that (under the fanciful conditions which I am imagining) he would have entered the correct names, but I do say that he would have been able to allot to each era of national movement its quota of great representative men in every form of activity except music, and that these

entries would, in a broad sense, tally with known historical personages.

Our own history, which has been a continual record of extension since the days of Elizabeth Tudor, offers us as good an example as any other.

First we have the great national awakening at the time of the Armada, and a corresponding over-seas activity in America and the East Indies.[1] At home this movement finds its counterpart in the sudden and unexpected blaze of the Elizabethan drama.

In the succeeding century the national vitality, not content with its dreams of Western Empire, turns towards the East, and finds an outlet for its trade in India and Northern Africa.[2] At home we have the long list of Jacobean scholars, philosophers, and divines, at least two great poets, many great prose writers, sculptors, medallists and builders of the first rank, as well as the names that represent the founding of modern science in Charles the Second's reign.

In the next century—the eighteenth—the national appetite for exploration and conquest seems to be not sated but sharpened. India, Canada, the South Seas are all visited and brought wholly or partly under the sway of England, and this despite the fact that a large part of the national resources has to be continually employed in European warfare.[3] At home we find such representative names as Pope, Addison, Gray,

[1] Drake's voyage round the World, 1577; Raleigh in Virginia, 1584; Patent granted to the East India Company, 1600; Hawkins at the Court of the Great Mogul, 1609.

[2] Jamaica taken, 1656; S. Carolina settled, 1669; Darien expedition, 1698-1700; Tangier passed into English hands as the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles the Second; Second East India Company, 1698.

[3] Gibraltar taken, 1704; S. Sea Bubble, 1720-1721; Georgia colonized, 1732; Anson's Voyages, 1740-1744; Clive in India,

Goldsmith, Steele, Sheridan, Bentley, Porson, Johnson, Newton, Romney, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Constable.

In the nineteenth century we can only make a hasty reference to the long catalogue of England's over-seas activity. It includes the complete subjugation and consolidation of the Indian Empire, the conquest of Burma, the domination of the Federated Malay States and Sarawak, an enormous extension of territory in all parts of Africa, and the acquisition of a large number of small stations whose geographical position makes them integral factors in our Empire. All the time that England is carrying out these enterprises she is faced with long and expensive Continental wars and with a continual drain of her children to the Colonies. Thus she loses in two ways: First, the productive energies of a large number of her people who either perish in actual warfare or are compelled to devote their lives to providing the necessary funds for that warfare; and, Second, the energies of her emigrants, who either devote themselves to their own well-being in one of her Colonies, leaving her to face the problems of Empire unaided, or else take themselves and their productive powers into a foreign country. The total of national vitality which is presupposed by this short summary is, of course, enormous, and the wonder remains that she is able to mirror its size and complexity in her home-activities.[1]

1750-1760; War with France in N. America, 1754; Plassey, 1757; Wolfe at Quebec, 1759; Conquest of Canada completed, 1769; Cook's voyages, 1770-1779; Warren Hastings in India, 1772-1785; American War, 1775-1783; Elliot at Gibraltar, 1779-1782; Wars with Tippoo Saib, 1783-1799; Cape of Good Hope taken, 1795; Spice Islands taken, 1796.

[1] Malta taken, 1800; Mahratta war, Assaye, 1803; Madeira taken, 1807; Ionian Islands (Collingwood), 1809; Algiers bom-

There is no difficulty, however, in proving that, so far from showing signs of fatigue, the output of over-seas energy only increases her productivity at home ; and to realize this we need only glance at a list of such names as Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, Turner, Millais, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Darwin, Lister, Dickens and Thackeray.[1]

From this hasty sketch the reader will be able to judge how uniform has been our activity in every department of public life but music ; and, if he wishes to enforce the argument, he can take any nation which has shown an over-seas activity similar to our own, and mark how (as in the case of Holland) it is accompanied by a similar productiveness in painters, carvers, metal-workers, engineers, statesmen, soldiers and sailors—but not in musicians. He will also be able to see that, when we return to our original question, why the English people have not been able to produce a National School of Opera, we shall not be able to find an easy answer in the often-repeated statement "that they have always been too busy doing something else."[2] For it is quite plain that, however busy they

barded, 1816; Parry's voyages, 1819; Burmese war, 1824; Chinese opium war, 1839-1842 ; Afghan war, 1838-1842 ; War in Scinde, 1843 ; Sikh wars, 1845-1849; Kaffir wars, 1847-1848; Burmese war, 1852 ; Annexation of Oude, 1856 ; Abyssinian expedition, 1868; as well as more recent acquisitions, by war or otherwise, in almost every part of Africa.

[1] From these lists of well-known names, taken almost at haphazard, I have purposely excluded all sailors, soldiers, explorers, administrators and engineers, because they may be considered to be more exactly the actual, and, as it were, proximate makers of Empire. It would not, therefore, be germane to my argument to include their names in a list of the other activities which accompany national movements.

[2] In his lecture "About Music" delivered at Birmingham in 1888, Sir Arthur Sullivan said: "I will not go into the causes

have been, they have always found time to produce a multitude of great men and great artists, who may, perhaps, find their cause in the World-Empire, but who cannot be said to be directly useful to that Empire except as an illustration.

But there is another, and still more important conclusion to be drawn from our comparison of musical and national activities, for, if we contrast the original historical chart with the chart as filled in by our imaginary "Man from Mars," we cannot help noticing that not only do the musical entries fail to tally with the other entries in a general way, but that they are in every case precisely opposed to each other. Where we might have expected music, there is none; where we might have expected no music, there it is. In other words, as soon as a nation begins to extend and exteriorize itself it ceases to develop its musical, though not necessarily its other artistic, faculties. In

which for nearly 200 years made us lose that high position, and threw us into the hands of the illustrious foreigners, Handel, Haydn, Spohr, Mendelssohn (so long the favourite composers of the English) and of the Italian Opera, which exclusively occupied the attention of the fashionable classes, and, like a great car of Juggernaut, overrode and crushed all efforts made on behalf of native music. *My belief is that this was largely due to the enthusiasm with which commerce was pursued, and the extraordinary way in which religious and political struggles, and, later still, practical science, have absorbed our energies.*" But this belief seems to have no great value as a basis for deduction, for, quite apart from the fact that (in England, at any rate) the most commercial places (*e.g.* South Lancs, Birmingham, and Yorkshire) are also the most musical, it is obvious that none of the pursuits named can possibly preclude groups of individuals from maintaining a truly national art by means of native professional musicians. Neither France nor Germany shows any lack of commercial, religious, political, or scientific energy, but the fact remains that they have been able to combine these activities with a purely national musical development. This argument is, therefore, useless, and we are forced to look for the differentiating factor elsewhere.

a broad sense, and with some very slight modifications of place and occasion, this is a historical fact. It is therefore in this one fact—world-power, which is at the present day very much the same thing as sea-power—that we can find an explanation of the perplexing phenomena of musical history.

"But," the reader may well ask, "why is it that these vast semi-conscious national movements should not have the same effect on the production of music as they have on the production of any other art, such as that of the painter, the sculptor, or the poet?" This is a reasonable question and, since we must accept the difference of effect as matter of undoubted history, we must endeavour to find a satisfactory answer by contrasting the arts of poetry, painting, and sculpture with that of music, and so arriving at some fundamental difference between the two.

That some such fundamental difference exists we might be led to guess by merely looking at the faces of half a dozen representatives of each of the arts which I have named, for while it would be mere matter of guesswork to tell the painter from the sculptor, or either from the literary man, no one would have any difficulty in picking out the musician. This indeed is matter of common speech, for even in this country, where such physical marks as long hair are almost unknown, a man is spoken of as "looking like a musician," whereas no one ever makes a similar guess at a sculptor's or a painter's identity, unless it be that he judges from his white smock or paintbox.

Now, this superficial difference of aspect is an effect caused by a simple but fundamental difference of mental process. It cannot, indeed, be doubted that the actual technical problems presented to the individual poet, painter, sculptor, and musician are to be

solved by an application of the same mental processes in all four cases, and that the same mental process applied in the same way produces identical results in all the four arts; but, on the other hand, it is equally beyond doubt that, in its inception, the musical activity differs from the other activities not in degree but in kind.

The poet, the painter, and the sculptor depend, in the first place, solely on external stimuli. In the case of the sculptor the stimulus is the form, which appears to him as an actually existent object approximately reproducible in whatever material he may have to hand: in the case of the painter the stimulus is the variation of colour-mass which he can partially reproduce by means of paint. The poet, for his part, depends on a—to him—less stationary, but no less external, series of stimuli, for (unless he is merely a rhyming philosopher) he must first receive through his senses the impressions of men, places, and events.

Now, the art of the composer differs fundamentally from all these. It is, of course, like the other three arts, an expression of the emotions interpreted in terms of the intellect, but, unlike them, it depends for its inception on no external stimulus whatever; and this fact is of far-reaching importance when we come to consider the larger question of national in relation to musical development. I do not say that the actual *cunning* of the musician differs from that of the painter, the sculptor, or the poet. They all make the same use of historical forms of expression, of idea-associations, and of emotional experiences. In all four cases the art-work ought to represent to us a sum of the artist's emotional experiences, though sometimes—in artists of a low emotional index—it

represents no more than a collection of associated ideas. But, whatever the mental process in building up the art-work, we must recognize the fact that the actual inception of musical creation differs from that of any other form of artistic creation.

The painter, the sculptor, and the poet gather in the things which they can see and touch and hear. They pass these sense-impressions through their minds, and bring forth a "version" of them coloured and modified by their own personalities. The musician, wholly self-centred, passes through the same process, but the creative act begins in a quite different manner in that he looks for his stimulus to nothing outside his own personality. In pure music he can no more express definitely the emotion of "anger" than he can the idea of an "apple-tree." In both cases, of course, a singer may make the meaning of the music clear by means of words; and in the former case it would be easy, even in pure instrumental music, to write passages which would "sound angry." But this means no more than that the musical sounds recall (by association) the sounds which people utter when angry, and no listener would be surprised to hear that the composer had a different intention in his mind.

Lock the painter, the poet, and the sculptor up within four bare walls: give them light, paint, canvas, pen, ink, paper, clay—and in ten years they will produce nothing but from memory. Lock the musician up with his pens and paper: rob him of every external impression possible: take away even sight and hearing,—and he will continue his artistic development unchecked by his surroundings. The reason is that, in his case, the balance between the interior and the exterior tilts deeply in favour of the former, whereas

in the arts of the other three, the two arms of the scale are almost in equipoise.

The mind of the composer, though strangely complex when demanding the instrumental realization of his conceptions, moves, at their creation, almost unhampered by physical conditions. The simple mathematical facts with regard to a yard of catgut and an open pipe are his only postulates. It is the more necessary to insist on this contrast because many people, in comparing the activities of the musician with those of other artists, are led into the fallacy of supposing that his vast array of instruments and voices are analogues, in his art, to the much vaster external system which stimulates the imagination of the poet, the sculptor, and the painter. But such an analogy is based wholly on a confusion between the act of creating and the act of exhibiting the creation.[1]

If, indeed, we wished to attempt the (impossible) task of finding an analogy to musical creation in the other arts, we should have to invite the painter to produce a picture of the law of gravity, or the sculptor to express in clay the fact that two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen combine together to make water, or the poet to write a drama on the subject of "Twice two is four." Or, if we wished to turn the analogy round the other way we should have to ask the musician to write instrumental music which would be understood as representing Battersea Bridge, or Shelley's body at Via Reggio, or the Death of Tybalt : not merely the emotions called up in his

[1] The reader may note in passing that, though the creation of music is a very simple and inexpensive affair when compared with the creation of pictures or statuary, the two latter turn the tables very much in their own favour when it comes to exhibiting the finished creation.

mind by these subjects,—that is common to all four arts—nor the reproductions of any physical sounds which he may associate with them (such as the even flow of the river, the beating of waves, or the angry sounds of quarrel and murder); but music-pictures which, including perhaps the emotions and the associated ideas, at the same time contain recognizable statements of these exterior objects.

We need not enter into the question of programme music to see that all these things are impossible. The painter can draw Newton watching the apple fall: the sculptor can model the form of the chemist, the test-tube, and even the drop of water: the poet can write his drama if you give him two men and two women to make his four. They can all put into their art whatever emotion they are capable of, but they also begin and end with the actual thing as they think it exists outside themselves. The musician, on the other hand, though he can depict the emotions called up in his mind by an idea or object, cannot include that idea or object in his musical statement.

The others make the wine, as it were, and pour it into bottles, while the composer presses out his grapes only on the stringent and seemingly unearthly condition that the wine can never be viewed through the dark glass of humanity. That his wine is the purer, the more elevated, and the more spiritual, for this deep and abiding condition of its making cannot be denied, but nevertheless it pays the penalty of its removal from all exterior relationships in that the art-work itself becomes separated from the general trend of national thought,[1] while the artist is forced

[1] In this connection it is interesting to note the extreme difficulty that composers have always felt in "rising" to any national occasion. Such opportunities occur to them in common with

into a position which either exalts him unduly above his more quiescent countrymen or else depresses him below the general imaginative level of his age.

Now, it is this simple but important difference between musical and all other forms of artistic creation that furnishes us with a clue to what I have called the "least-common-denominator" of musical and national activity.

We must remember that this one overmastering condition—the necessity of external stimuli to every art except music—governs the creative impulse of all other artists and exercises a steady pressure on their energies. The result of this condition is that music, as compared with the other arts, follows a path of its own that begins in a different place, runs between its own hedges, and makes for a totally different spot. It is not, however, with this contrast that we are specially concerned here, for our object is the larger one of bringing musical history into some sort of harmony with national history.

If we now go back to our original historical chart,

painters, sculptors, poets, and builders; but while the latter recognize them as part and parcel of their business, and are ordinarily successful in dealing with them, the attempt of the composer to work to order invariably ends in failure. This indicates an accurate, if unconscious, knowledge of the conditions under which alone he can produce original work. The history of the world, from Troy to Paardeberg, can very well be read in its poetry and sculpture, but every historical analogy teaches us that, if we could recover the music of the past 5000 years and examine it *in the light of historical events*, we should gain nothing but a feeling of confusion and surprise at its misleading and inadequate character. The reader may very well examine, from the historical and not the strictly musical standpoint, the composition and contents of such works as "The Dettingen Te Deum," "The Reformation Symphony," Wagner's forgotten occasional pieces, and even the "Eroica Symphony."

we shall at once be struck by the fact that, as there is a fundamental difference between the two forms of artistic activity, so there is a similar difference which divides all national activity into two broad fields. This difference, which is itself caused by race and geographical position, is not easily expressible in a single English word. Perhaps the difference between the Saxon words "outwardness" and "inwardness," or the Latin "exteriorization" and "interiorization," will give some idea of the thing which I propose to explain.

We must first attempt to take a broad, general view of European history, leaving out entirely the interminable petty squabbles which have been fomented by princes for their own ends, leaving out also all the bitter and useless bloodshed of the Churches, and the inconclusive marchings and counter-marchings of armed men to and from foreign territories. In doing this we shall be forced to recognize the existence in Europe of two distinct attitudes of mind which differentiate one nation from another just as music is differentiated from the other arts.

On the one hand we have nations (of which Germany down to the latter end of the nineteenth century is a type) sitting within their own borders, their backs, as it were, turned to their frontiers, and their eyes turned inwards. In such a nation there is no national projection of energy outwards, but there is an intense and cherishing spirit of national pride inwards—a spirit which often produces a sturdy defensive militarism and which ties up the whole nation into a band of brotherhood. The common impulse, however, which unites such a band of brothers, is not (as in the case of the Vikings, the

Norman pirates, and the Elizabethan buccaneers) an impulse of adventure, of acquisition, and of national exteriorization, but an impulse of common sympathy in defence, of tenacity to ideals at home, and of conservation of the national energy.

Of the second and precisely opposite type of national mind the best examples (in two very different ways) are Rome down to about the time of the discovery of America, and England from Elizabeth's day till now. In a nation of this type we find its citizens perpetually standing, as it were, in a state of eagerness and tension, their eyes strained outwards to and beyond their frontiers. The whole nation seems ready to spring and, wherever possible, does spring beyond its borders. This impulse towards national projection may become, as in the case of England, the one absorbing passion of centuries, and may result, as it has with her, in the acquisition of a great World-Empire. I have, however, specially mentioned Rome as an instance of this mental attitude because I wish to make it clear that, though the term "world-power" may be conveniently used to describe the (possible) results of such a process of exteriorization, it is not the actual gain or possession of territory, or even the power springing from these gains, which is of importance in this connection, but the continual projection of the national mind outwards which lies behind and perhaps causes these gains.

This can be seen plainly in the unique case of Rome, who in her long tenure of world-power gained almost nothing in the way of actual territorial possessions. Yet she remains the great living example of a State whose energies were wholly devoted to exteriorization, for, though it is a

common saying that "all roads lead to Rome," we must (if we are to understand the mental attitude of the mediaeval Roman churchman) put ourselves in his place in Rome *from* which all roads lead. We can then see him like a spider—I say it without meaning any offence—sitting in the middle of a vast network of international activities, with his gaze always running outwards along some line or other of his web. His object is the extension of the Roman power and the Roman ideals, just as the present-day Englishman's object is the extension of his own power and his own ideals. The object aimed at and the habit of mind which gives the aim its possibility of success are the same in both cases: the method of execution and the results are, of course, quite different.

Now, if we compare any two nations of these opposing types—the exteriorizing and the interiorizing—we can see that, though they both offer in diverse ways an outlet for the imaginative energy of their people, the conditions built up within each State must be exactly contrary to each other. On the one hand there is an atmosphere of contentment, of peaceful contemplation and reflection, of leisure, and of concentration: on the other, of (necessary) discontent, of nervous anxiety, of continual motion, and of expansion. It is only when we realize the gulf that divides these two types of society that we can bring their dependent musical activities into historical focus. For no nation has ever been hindered in its musical development by the fact that it was "busy doing something else"; and to prove that one has only to select any developed national school of music at random, German, Viennese, Florentine, Venetian, Flemish, French, or Italian, and set down against its

history its national record of contemporary wars, invasions, expeditions, political and dynastic turmoils, its buildings, pictures, and statuary, its poetry and prose, its engineering and its commerce.

Outside chronic poverty there is, indeed, only one factor which can have any deterrent effect on national musical development, and that is the acquisition of world-power. Consider for one moment what is the pressure on art of this continual attitude of exteriorization. To the poet, the painter, and the sculptor, who all rely on external stimuli for their creative impulses, this attitude is not only not a hindrance, it is an advantage. The world of new sights, of new sounds, and of strange conceptions, which comes to them from over the seas, stirs their minds and fires their imaginations. An epoch of great national outreaching, or a moment when some mighty outburst of energy occurs, always finds its intellectual and artistic counterpart at home in art. The form taken by this art is, of course, a matter of circumstance—often a matter of mere physical circumstance: it may be sculptured marble, as at Athens: it may be paint and architecture, as in Italy: or it may be drama, as in Elizabethan England; but the one form which it will not take and never has taken is developed music.

There may be an accession of wealth sufficiently great to make the founding or development of a music school perfectly easy on its material side, as was the case in mid-Victorian days: there may be foreign musicians of the greatest distinction resident in the State, as was the case in George the First's days; but all these things avail the nation nothing, the musical faculty will remain sterile, or will produce, at most, a still-born offspring. And the reason is the very simple one that the musician depends for his

creative impulse on his inner self, and all these vast projections and exteriorizations of the national mind do not only not help him, but actually prevent him producing music.

The fundamental difference, then, between music and the other arts calls for a difference of mental atmosphere. It may be quite true that where reflective poetry and art flourish, there music may flourish; but it is also true that, where the main energies of a nation are devoted to exteriorization—and perhaps incidentally to its exemplification by means of the other arts—there no music can flourish.

Composers, in fact, have to work under one of two sets of conditions, favourable or adverse, and if we wish to present the violence of these contrasting conditions in the form of a miniature, and, as it were, individualized picture, we should have to imagine two composers at work—one in a quiet secluded room, moderately furnished and moderately lit; the other in an over-lit and over-furnished room, filled with an eager, bustling, crowd of people who continually gather in animated groups round the open windows and pass, chattering, in and out of the open doors. These two pictures give a fair idea of the two sets of conditions which have existed alongside one another in Germany and England from 1600 to the present day. The result is seen in the difference between the musical histories of the two countries. In each case there is constant musical activity, and, at the outset, it is an activity of equally capable men; but the German, working quietly, unaffected by the calls of Empire, has been able to build up, brick by brick, an immense and noble artistic structure, while the Englishman has been running about trying first one style of foundation, then a second, which he abandons

distractedly for a third. Even in spite of himself, the Englishman has been able to produce one or two men of first-class ability, but the disheartening record of their isolation has had its natural result and, as we near the nineteenth century, we find that, though England can enter two such "writers" as Robert Clive and Warren Hastings to her East Indian Service, in her Musical Service she can only match Beethoven with Balfe and Bishop.

It must not be imagined that this terrible weight of externality, which has checked the development of music in England for 300 years, is felt less by musicians in the aggregate than by the individual musician. Indeed, it is felt more, and its effects are to be seen much more clearly in a broad study of history than in the records of separate composers struggling against its overpowering influence. This is only what we might expect, unless we were willing to degrade the art to the level of a trivial amusement unrelated to any form of national endeavour.

Our object, then, must be to take the key which has been forged for us by the art of music itself, and attempt to open with it the complex lock of history. So far from this being a difficult task, we shall find with surprise that every ward of the key, so to speak, fits in perfectly with the delicate mechanism of the lock. All the perplexing facts of musical history, which have hitherto been matter of mere bewilderment, at once fall into their expected places, and the seemingly contradictory mental attitude, which produces in a nation every form of energy but music, not only ceases to perplex us, but explains itself almost automatically.

But before I deal in outline with the influence of world-power on music, I must guard the reader

against two false deductions. My object in these chapters is to find out the nature of the factor which has always prevented the development of music in nations whose conditions were otherwise well suited to its production, and then, in my subsequent chapters, to apply this knowledge to the special case of England. We must not, however, suppose that the mere absence of the national outstretching towards world-power is sufficient to make the production of music a certainty. Its presence, so to speak, always sterilizes, though its absence does not necessarily fertilize the musical faculty. This is only what might be expected, for there are many other positive factors and circumstances of material and geographical condition which must be in a sort of equipoise before we can get a "nest" sufficiently warm and well protected for the laying of the musical eggs. These factors and circumstances connote, not what is commonly called a "musical atmosphere," meaning developed musical conditions, but the much simpler and more elementary factors of earth, air, and water.

It is quite obvious that (though all peoples are equal originally as much for song as for speech) if a nation is placed so that for half the year its population is either frozen (as in Scandinavia), or parched (as in Spain), or in tiny compartments separated by mountain barriers (as in Switzerland and Greece), or on land so barren that its population is never far above the starvation line (as in northern Scotland and parts of Russia), or in towns such as London,[1] where there is an absence of sunlight and pure air, it cannot develop the physical necessities for musical culture. It may even be that the national index of well-being

[1] London seems to have been almost the only spot in which Wagner was unable to work with ease.

is so low that a sufficiently large number of persons cannot be relieved from physical toil to form a professional musical class.

There must be, as I have said, an equipoise of natural conditions before musical development can begin, but, in studying these (positive) factors, it is interesting to note how rigorous and invariable is the action of the (negative) law of exteriorization. We find, indeed, nations and powers, such as mediaeval Rome, ideally situated, on the material side, for the production of music, and actually supporting numbers of musicians, and yet unable to produce national music. We find other nations, such as the Portuguese, the seaboard Dutch, and the English, suddenly profiting by the changed conditions of the modern world, so as to acquire enormous wealth, yet, like mediaeval Rome, unable to produce national music. On the other hand, we have small communities, such as those in the various German and Austrian States of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose people, neither "blessed" with great wealth, nor overwhelmed by the distractions of Empire, were therefore able to found and perfect a national school of music.

The second false deduction against which I wish to warn the reader is that the actual material possession of world-power can retard or prevent musical development. That this is a fallacy can be seen from a consideration of the fact that music is the result of an emotional and a mental process, and therefore its natural development cannot be hindered except by a hard-set, antagonistic national habit either of the mind or of the emotions. It is not, then, the mere holding in fee of so many square miles of territory, or the subjection of so many million aliens, but the

national grasping outwards in the direction of these objects which constitutes the bar to musical progress.[1]

With these two provisions in our minds to guard us against hasty generalizations, we may take up our chart for the third time, and endeavour, with the aid of this new factor, to bring the facts of musical and of national history into their true relationship.

[1] In this connection it is an interesting speculation as to what will be the course of musical history in an Empire like that of England. By the mere exhaustion of possibilities the time cannot be far off when the Empire will reach a point where there can be no further expansion. Given such a case, where the nation has at once great wealth and the opportunity of peaceful reflection, the musical results should be on a scale of strangeness and immensity hitherto unknown. One must, however, confess that, though it may be possible for the nation to come to some such period of mental contentment and concentration as far as its white Empire is concerned, such a state of mind seems fundamentally impossible so long as the anxieties involved in its domination over alien races remain.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF WORLD-POWER ON MUSIC

Preliminary

The reader must first of all remember that, however fragmentary is our knowledge of musical development before the time of Christ, we know this fact,—that the Greeks perhaps invented and certainly elaborated a minute system of *theoretical* music. This system possibly, though not probably, may have been a mere "paper" system which differed from ours in preceding, not following, actual musical practice.

At any rate the whole of Greek music, theory and practice, passed with the rest of Greek culture into the hands of the Romans about the middle of the second century B.C. We are, therefore, apparently faced by two different problems; for, in addition to enquiring why such and such nations have been unable to develop themselves musically in comparatively modern times, we are forced to ask how it is that no practical or theoretical advance took place during the first 1000 years or so of our era. But, however widely different these two problems appear to be at first sight, they must be essentially the same problem, for the very simple reason that the factors in the two cases cannot alter; and, therefore, unless we are willing to

invent the wild explanation of a changed psychology or physique in the modern world, it is in some one or other of these common factors that we must seek a solution of the problem.

In order to discuss this question from the point of view which I have already indicated—that is to say by means of a comparison between the national and the musical activities of any given time—we may conveniently divide the Christian era into four periods. The limits of these periods cannot, of course, be stated arbitrarily in dates, but it is important to notice that, though they are in a sense merely artificial lines of separation, yet in each period we have a perfectly distinct type of society based on an equally distinct type of national interiorization or exteriorization. The dates selected are neither musical dates nor (except in one case) purely historical dates, but what I may call Musico-national dates :- that is to say, they mark the times at about which the characteristic forces of the period in question first begin to show themselves.

These four periods are as follows :

(1) The period of the Roman Settlement, from 1 to 400 A.D.

(2) The period of the Dark Ages, from 400 to 1000.

(3) The Mediaeval Period, from 1000 to 1500.

(4) The Modern Period, from 1500 to the present day.

(1) The Period of the Roman Settlement (1 to 400 A.D.).

From the earliest days of the Christian era down to the beginning of the Dark Ages Europe presented the appearance of a single, large, armed camp,

of which the headquarters-tent was the city of Rome. Its walls, which, 750 years before Christ, were only a simple palisade enclosing the seven hills of Rome itself, had been continually pushed outwards until now they occupied a long, irregular line drawn, on the south by the coast of Africa, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the east and north by an enormous army permanently encamped in a huge chain of forts.[1]

Inside the vast circumference of this frontier the Empire enjoyed that fair measure of prosperity which Rome always assured to her subject races by her even-handed and comprehensive system of justice.

[1] This military disposition—known as the "hard shell and soft kernel"—was modified, at the moment of conflict with the barbarians in the fifth century A.D., in favour of a system by which large striking forces of crack troops were held in readiness *within* the external circle of defence. This change mirrored the new type of national outlook. When it was effected the old frontier stations became nothing but (weak) outposts of Empire, and they were garrisoned by the worst-paid and least cared-for troops in the army. The great difficulty of identifying place-names in Asia and Africa makes it impossible to ascertain how many of these armed posts were in existence at any one time, but the number must have been very large, as we know that, on the Danubian frontier alone (from Lake Constance to the Black Sea) there were, besides smaller and less easily recognized outposts, at least 115 important military stations. Similar information is accessible with regard to the disposition of troops in Africa, but of the two great military provinces of "Germania" on the Rhine frontier we have no knowledge beyond a list of troops serving under the commanding-officer ("dux") at Mainz. These administrative details have been preserved to us in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a fifth century official document giving an account of the great Officers of State, their insignia, entourage, and provinces, as well as the names of Civil Servants and of Officers commanding Cavalry and Infantry. The whole document has been edited by Böcking (1834): there is an important MSS. copy in the Bodleian which has been collated and published by a German, Otto Seeck, in Berlin.

Furthermore, the Roman arms, which by turns repressed and protected its subjects, secured a condition of deep tranquillity unexampled before or since in the history of the world. One might be tempted to think that, at such a period, no condition was wanting for the sudden and brilliant development of the musical art.

Unfortunately, in addition to the Empire inside this frontier line, there was also a *something* outside: and it was in the active, conscious knowledge of this *something* that the Roman had always existed and organized his system. It had never mattered to him whether his border was a single furrow in the ploughland, a village stockade, a little line of military posts almost within sight of his own hills, or the great sea- and land-line which was now the rampart of his Empire: in every case his one compelling and overmastering impulse had been to push that border further outwards. And now, in the process of continual extension, he had come to a place where the border would go no further and where the *something* outside really mattered.

He had already been warned of its existence as a gloomy shadow overhanging his Empire when he had seen his city sacked and burnt, in its early days, by the barbarians.[1] This warning had always haunted his consciousness as a dreadful, unhappy nightmare: had had, indeed, to be hushed up and converted into an old wife's tale for the sake of his nerves. Now he was compelled to wake up, to see the awful phantom gathering itself together into material shape, and to wait its coming in frantic despair.

Hence, if we wish to understand the mental attitude of Europe down to about 400 A.D. we must regard it

[1] Invasion of Rome by the Gauls, 390 B.C.

as a culminating moment of painful exteriorization. On each side of the frontier sits an anxious, waiting multitude: the Roman watching the Barbarian, at first from a continual hope of "frontier rectification" in his own favour, and later on with the ever-present fear of invasion: the Barbarian gazing back at the Roman, with a blind, reckless determination to break through the cordon and plunder his way to the centre of the world: on the one side, the bloodthirsty and lustful hope of gain: on the other, the nervous apprehension that comes to a self-centred State swollen by its domination over alien races, and so diseased beyond hope of recovery.

Thus we arrive at a time when the sword is, as it were, poised in the air. Rome is still Rome with the prosperity and wealth that she has heaped up as an incident of her millennium of conquest; but, when she arrives at the culminating point of Empire, we find her, not (as England may perhaps be found) with a great army of settlers peacefully developing her traditions and consolidating her power in all parts of the world, but with an actual military army engaged in repressing her half-tamed subjects, and with a political system so inelastic as to be unable to satisfy even the most elementary aspirations of her subjects.

The consequence of this unimaginative rigidity of system was that, though in the fulness of time Europe had come to a long period of repose, it was only a sort of anaesthetized and unnatural sleep. The Roman was, indeed, freed for the first time in a thousand years from the necessity of draining away his best energies on foreign conquest; but he exchanged his former slavery for a worse servitude. For, exhausted as he was, he found himself

compelled, not only to guard his Empire from external assault, but at the same time to keep a heavy and sleepless watch over his own widely-separated subjects.

Thus to one long period of simple exteriorization—from Rome outwards—succeeded a second and more complex period in which the Empire as a whole looked anxiously at the Barbarian beyond her frontiers, while she herself was watched as anxiously by the masters-minds in Rome. This latter period was, as I have said, a time of deep tranquillity within the Empire, and, if music itself had not given us the clue to the one preventive factor in its development, we should have imagined that there was no period in the world's history in which we could so confidently look for a great development of the art. Without that clue we might have expected to find some one or other of the mediaeval discoveries in music, which we could set off against the many illustrious names in literature.[1] As a matter of fact, no period was ever less adapted for musical development, and, with the

[1] The writers of this period are generally compared very unfavourably with those of the Augustan age. We must not, however, overlook the fact that, whatever the merits of individual artists, the post-Augustan writers as a whole exhibit an activity, a breadth of outlook, and a variety of topic which represent their own times just as completely as the poetry of Vergil and Horace exemplifies the great days of Augustus. The list of post-Augustan writers down to 400 A.D. includes, not only such well-known poets, historians, satirists, philosophers, churchmen, biographers, jurists, and grammarians, as Juvenal, the Plinies, Seneca, Martial, Tacitus, Persius, Suetonius, Silius Italicus, Ausonius, Lucan, Priscian, Quintilian, Tertullian, Ulpian, Gaius, Macrobius, Claudian, Ammianus, St. Augustine; but also the names of less-known writers dealing with such topics as Surveying (Balbus, Hyginus, Siculus Flaccus), Engineering (Frontinus), Military Tactics (Vegetius), Geography (Pomp. Mela), Husbandry (Palladius Rutilius Taurus and Aggenus Urbicus), and Medicine (Celsus,

exception of a few vague, doubtful rumours connected with the name of St. Ambrose,[1] we have nothing.

To expect any one of these discoveries to have occurred in the days of the Empire may seem a fantastic dream to the student of historical facts; but there was nothing *a priori* to have prevented music marching forward in step with the other Roman activities in literature, architecture, engineering, statuary, and warfare,[2] nothing, that is to say,

Scribonius, and Th. Priscian). It seems that the national attitude of exteriorization assumed in Augustus's day an intensely concentrated picturesqueness which afforded (as in the days of our own Elizabeth) an ideal soil for the propagation of those arts which are primarily dependent on external impressions. In the 400 years that followed, the mental attitude of exteriorization offered a less suitable field, because it was extended over a wider area and was therefore less vivid. The result was a certain harassed, fatigued, and sometimes despondent condition of mind within the Empire, which, together with the much larger spread of the Roman energies, is reflected in the catalogue of writers given above.

[1] In the last quarter of the fourth century A.D.

[2] It is common knowledge that the Roman culture was an offshoot from that of the Greeks, and it is therefore constantly referred to as being on a distinctly lower plane. Whether this is so or not, the Romans actually managed to express their national genius satisfactorily in various ways—in poetry, prose, sculpture, architecture, science, and all the technical crafts which were necessitated by their great Empire. In their poetry it is true that they adhered somewhat closely to Greek models, but this was chiefly in matters of detail, and nothing can be more unmistakeable than its strong Roman tang. This is evident, not only in the poetry of the Augustan and pre-Augustan periods, but also in that of the "silver age," whose writers were very often not even Italians. In the other arts that I have mentioned the activity of the Romans has been less often challenged, and, as a matter of fact, in their prose and their sculpture they invented or adapted a consistent and highly vigorous national style; while in architecture, science, and engineering they were, of course,

but the one factor that the whole world was facing, not inwards, but outwards; and it is only when we take this factor into account that we can understand why this period was so little adapted for musical development, and why, as a matter of fact, no musical development of any sort took place.

(2) The Period of the Dark Ages (400 to 1000 A.D.).

To this first period succeeds a second of infinite complexity historically, but, from our point of view, of extreme simplicity. The sword, poised so long in the air, has at length fallen, and the first barbarians have made their way into Italy.[1]

Then follows an era of turmoil so extraordinary as to be unparalleled in history.[2] The whole world

the pioneers of Europe. In music alone, judging from the little we know of the state of Greek music about 400 B.C., and its state at Rome in St. Ambrose's time (400 A.D.), we can say that they did next to nothing. Their general attitude towards it seems to have coincided, at any rate to some degree, with that of the average nineteenth century Englishman; and the respectable individual who deplored the degenerate musical tendencies of his time appears to have existed even in those far-off days. See Horace's complaint in the *Ars Poetica* of what we should call "noisy modern orchestration," "Tibia non ut nunc," etc.

[1] A.D. 405.

[2] This period of world-movement, or, as the Germans call it, "folk-wandering," lasted for some 500 or 600 years. It included (1) the march of the Huns (Mongols) into Europe by a south-westerly route from Asia (Attila defeated at Châlons 451); their invasion of the Byzantine Empire (repelled by Belisarius 558). (2) The movements of the Ostrogoths from South Russia (*a*) along the line of the Danube and then in a southerly direction into Italy, and (*b*) southward across the Black Sea to Constantinople, and so into Asia Minor (Odoacer defeated by Theodore 493, his successors compelled by Belisarius to leave Italy). (3) The conflict of the Huns with the Ostrogoths in South Russia;

moves uneasily, like a heavy sleeper gradually awakened. Nations and tribes suddenly start up to march, sword in hand, across two continents. From the uttermost parts of the earth they come in a never-ending stream, Vandal and Ostrogoth, Saracen and Mongol, all driven forward in frantic confusion by the blind whips of destiny. Some make for Rome or Constantinople in long marches that last for nearly a century: others, feeling only the goad and having neither cunning to plan nor strength to achieve, rise up and fight their way aimlessly from one part of Europe to another.

In this way whole nations spring up, remain for a moment in sight as sinister and bloody apparitions, and then suddenly disappear. Such nations are

the subsequent union of the two peoples and their attack on the Visigoths in Eastern Hungary and Rumania. (4) The irruption of the Visigoths and Vandals into Italy (Alaric enters Rome 410). (5) The westward wanderings of the (Christianized) Visigoths into Gaul and Spain beginning in 415 and ending in 621 with the complete absorption of Spain except its north-west corner (the Suevi). (6) The overthrow of their Empire by the Saracens, who move from Arabia proper (about 640) through southern Asia Minor, Egypt, northern Africa, into Sicily, Spain, and the south of France (defeated at the Battle of Tours, 732, by Charles Martel, the Frankish leader). (7) The irregular movements of the Vandals over an area bounded by the Danube, the Elbe, the Guadalquiver, and Roman Carthage (in North Africa) (Genseric sacks Rome 455). (8) The invasions of the Lombards, first in a southerly direction to the Danube, then due west and south into Italy (sixth century; defeated and their kingdom ended in the eighth century by Pepin and Charlemagne). (9) The wanderings and conquests of the Normans over an area bounded on the north by the Shetlands and Norway and Sweden, on the east by the Dneiper, on the west by England and Normandy, on the south by Sicily (ninth and tenth centuries). (10) The smaller southerly movements of Franks and Burgundians in the fifth century. (11) The incursions of the Angles and Saxons westward into England in the fifth century.

perhaps the more interesting to us, because in them we can see how completely the idea of purposeless exteriorization had seized the imagination of mankind. In a word, the era of the dark ages was the great illustrative era of all those forces which hinder musical art. The history of the earlier (Aryan) migrations is known to us only by ethnological and philological guesswork; but in this, the second known, migratory period of the world we have the detailed history, not merely of an idea lashed into passion, but of the passion itself taking actual physical shape in vast national movements and wanderings.[1]

The result is a confused and pitiable welter of conquest and re-conquest, incursion and retreat, massacre and retaliation which centres round,—not one city as in the great days of Rome, nor round a dozen nations as in our own time,—but round a multitude of detached points, each one of which exists by virtue of some advantageous physical endowment of defence or offence.

Thus, eventually, emerges the idea of the city-state led and ruled (for his own good) by prince, bishop, or nobleman. Thus, too, under the compelling might or wisdom of some one superman, a number of these city-states are easily united into loose groups, and as easily disunited when the masterful guidance is withdrawn. To such groups we of to-day conveniently apply the word "nation," but it must be remembered that the word, in their case, does not carry its present meaning of identity

[1] The earliest irruption of Scythians into India seems to have taken place just before the Christian era. Northern India was first over-run by the Huns at about the time when they began to press on the boundaries of European civilization. (See Bampfylde Fuller, *Studies of Indian life and sentiment*, chapter iv.)

in language, traditions, and ideals. Their equilibrium is, in fact, unstable; their frontiers vary continually, and, in common with the rest of Europe, they are in a state of flux.

The point that concerns us most is that there are now, not one or two, but some hundreds of small cities, each watching its neighbour and keenly aware of its own possibilities in the way of future empire. The idea of a single city voluntarily subordinating its interests to those of another for the sake of their joint welfare has scarcely dawned. Cities whose distance from the central point of Christianity is only that of a few days' march continue to exist, perhaps for centuries, within sight of each other's walls, and yet unable to come to any nearer terms of friendship than those which bind the Red Indian to the white settler—the fear of cold steel.

Every little captain who has hacked out his right to the title of "Comrade" or "Leader" sits behind his walls eyeing the hill-fort opposite him in the hope that some lucky murder or wholesale burglary may change his rank to that of "First Man" or "Ruler."[1] To us, far removed from the cares and preoccupations of the time, the situation seems deplorable and preventable, but, in judging their standards, we must not forget that we are, as it were, looking back across the centuries through the wrong end of the telescope, and that the only real difference between us and them is that we have been able to scramble up—physically—to a slightly higher point of view, and that therefore we have a larger field of vision. To the tenth century European the fortified city, with its five or ten thousand

[1] "Comes," "Dux," "Princeps," "Rex."

inhabitants, was what the nation of many millions is to us; and, if we are inclined to wonder at the endless turmoil of blood and revenge that followed every chance plot or assassination in those days, we must reflect that the acts which seem to us the mere ebullitions of petty personal spite bore to the consciousness of that time exactly the same relationship as Cawnpore and Majuba bore to the consciousness of nineteenth century England.

Nor must we allow the historical complexity of this period to lead us away from its essential simplicity with regard to our enquiry. Through the whole of this terrifying history one unifying principle alone can be discerned, the principle of a ravenous lust for expansion and conquest, and it is the existence of this universal principle that forbids any hope of musical development.

It must be allowed that, in the overwhelming confusion of such a period, the material anxieties alone would be sufficient to prevent artistic advance of any kind. This is true both as theory and history; but we must safeguard ourselves from the easy deduction that the factors which prevented progress in music were the same as those which prevented progress in the other arts. Historical speculation is not of much value; but I think every analogy points to the probability that if the Romans, emerging strengthened and victorious from their struggle with the barbarians, had been able to keep their Empire intact, they would have won some corresponding victories in the field of art, literature, and science, but certainly none in that of music.

Before we leave this period it is necessary to glance, not at the long series of events which took place in Rome itself—a terrible and lengthy catalogue

of blood and fire, but at the altered conditions produced by the sum of these events. Long before the end of the Dark Ages, Rome had learnt the lesson that the strong right arm, so far from being a necessity, was often a hindrance to Empire. We accordingly find her still throned on the Mediterranean, but throned, in comparison with her former state, almost unarmed, yet stronger by the power of her brain than any Caesar had been able to make her by the might of his legions. How marvellously she employed this brain-power in order to keep close her grasp on the destinies of the world; how narrowly she watched Europe for her own, and for Europe's, good;[1] what infinite cunning and caution she showed in attack; what patience and determination in defeat; how every possibility and every circumstance was provided for; how, in a word, having exchanged an unsuccessful Caesar for a successful Pope,[2] she prepared, by sheer subtlety of brain and finger, to regain and remould to apparent permanence an empire which she had not been able to hold by blood and iron, can not be more than hinted here. It is enough to say that, by the end of this period, she

[1] This can be seen in the published extracts from the Papal *Regesta*, a series of ledgers and day-books (numbering 2016 volumes) in which were posted up the whole of the diplomatic correspondence, records of appointments, indults, and dispensations, as well as the minutes of the Papal Court. The earliest volumes of these *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, dealing with the period under discussion, are lost; but those still in existence date from the time of Pope Innocent III. (A.D. 1198), and continue to the end of the sixteenth century. From them we get an amazing idea of the "weekly, almost daily" communication that took place between Rome and her vassal-states.

[2] It was the founding of Constantinople on the site of the ancient Byzantium (A.D. 330) that first gave the bishops of Rome the possibility of greatly increased power, but already (in 350)

was in her old, unique position in Europe, putting into practice the lessons which she had learnt during 600 years of intrigue and bloodshed.

(3) THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD (1000 TO 1500 A.D.).

The line of division between the second and third periods is much less clearly marked than that between either the first and second or the third and fourth. We cannot label the moment of change with the name of any catastrophe or discovery whose far-reaching effects—as in the case of the barbarian inroads and the voyage of Columbus—mould the history of the succeeding centuries.

Nevertheless we are able to trace in this period the growth of a new national outlook, brought about by the continual slow ascendancy of the one type of force, the interiorizing, over the other, the exteriorizing. Such a profound change in the mental attitude of Europe could not be begun, much less carried out, in a few years. Indeed, the conflict between the two types of force—the music-forbidding and the music-fostering—begins well on the other side of the line, and continues far into the Middle Ages.

The fact that is of importance to us, however, is that Europe is gradually cooling off after 600 years of volcanic activity, and that, in this process of cooling off, she fuses together race with race, and leaves in her still fluid mass little hard knots or cores which will later on grow into what we now call "nations." The process is, as I have said, very slow, and the mass is still fluid; even the great Powers of the

they were in a position to vie with the imperial household in magnificence of retinue and appointments (Ammianus xxvii. 3; Jerome, tom. i. p. 13). The restrictive laws of Valentinian disallowed bequests to the clergy, a privilege enjoyed by "*sacerdotes idolorum, mimi, et aurigae et scorta.*"

early Middle Ages—such as the Carlovingian and Holy Roman Empires—are little more than loose, unstable groupings of subordinate States.

We must, however, note two important points. First, the whole character of national exteriorization has changed. It is no longer[1] an actual physical marching-out of a complete people determined to force its way to a new settling-ground. It is now nothing but a series of forays conducted on a small or a large scale, and extending over either a short or a long period. In any case the radical difference is the acknowledged existence of a centre or nucleus from which every little armed band sets out, and to which it intends to withdraw. But it is not only the invaders who feel the existence of this central nucleus; it is also the invaded. Here we get a second important fact—the first feeble beginnings of an actual process of interiorization, that is to say, of a nation turning inwards on itself and commencing to develop itself socially and politically without reference to external factors.

It is somewhere in this vague time—perhaps between 900 and 1000—that the first and greatest of all developments in musical history takes place—the discovery of two-part singing. This discovery, which precedes and comprehends within itself the possibility of all later inventions and developments, is too often made the subject of idle jest and comparison; but, in order to realize its fundamental importance, we must not view it from the standpoint of our own century, but from that of the century before which it occurred.

It is true that then, as now, the *accidental* coincidence of voices singing or shouting must have been common; but there was absolutely nothing *a priori*

[1] I omit the question of Rome for the moment.

to show that these chance intersections of speech or song could be made the basis of a new and complex form of human expression, or, indeed, that they could be utilized at all in any sort of art. To a European of the Dark Ages such an idea must have appeared as fantastic a dream as it would be to us if we were required to foresee the development of a new art from the simultaneous recitation of two poems, or from the haphazard combination of perfumes, or from the shifting movements of the kaleidoscope, or from our sense of the varying relationships between the planets.

The discovery, then, of "Dis-cant"[1] is one of the greatest steps forward ever taken by the human mind. It is not to be compared with such a mechanical invention as that of the locomotive, but rather—if comparison is possible—with some such fundamental discovery as that of the wheel. In both cases the discovery was probably not the work of one man, of one group of men, or even of one age, but was achieved by the slow effort of many men and many ages after a desperation of painful thought. But though we cannot either actually date this discovery with a definite year, or ascribe it to an individual, it presents itself to us as the subject of three broad historical connections—(1) the discovery was *not* made during the preceding 1000 years of Christian and barbarian conflict; (2) it *was* made as soon as the first beginnings of national settlement and stability appeared in Europe; (3) our earliest knowledge of its history comes, characteristically enough, from a Fleming.[2]

We have then got so far in our musical history as the sowing of the seed. But it is not to be supposed

[1] Which was developed later into the recognized science of "Organum."

[2] Hucbald, fl. circa 900.

that such a tender flower as music was to burst forth luxuriantly in the chilling atmosphere of the early Middle Ages. It was, however, no longer governed by merely negative conditions, and the peculiar interest of this period is that in it we first find the inexorable workings of the exteriorizing (and therefore musically undeveloping) habit of mind side by side with the interiorizing (and therefore musically developing) attitude. That the former was the *general* European habit of mind during this period is an undoubted fact, but it was now only *general* not *universal*, and it adds piquancy to our study when we observe that the nations who first devoted their national energies inwards, and who appeared the least likely (on other grounds) to develop the art, yet actually did so; while the world-power who alone (from material circumstances) seemed capable of a great artistic advance remained sterile for nearly 600 years.

I must here somewhat modify, or rather add to, my former statement that in this period "the whole character of national European exteriorization had changed," for, in viewing the history of this period, we can see two streams, as it were, flowing parallel to each other, but in opposite directions. The first of these two currents is the Papacy, the second the rest of Europe.

Several hundred years before this period began, the Papacy had seen the possibility of a world-wide exteriorization founded, not upon arms,[1] but upon

[1] The question of the temporal power, whatever its historical importance, need not detain us here. The Papacy undoubtedly exercised very complete powers of government throughout Europe at the beginning of the Middle Ages. At the time of the fourth Crusade (1204) the actual Church-States ran right across central Italy in an irregular oblong, and then reached as far north on the Adriatic coast as the Gulf of Venice.

brains; and long before the rest of Europe had passed out of the elemental state of savagery she had laid her plans for the dominion of Europe. Thus we see her going from strength to strength, swiftly and consciously adopting an attitude of exteriorization which the rest of Europe was slowly and unconsciously discarding. In this comparison, however, it must not be overlooked that the two *types* of exteriorization are distinct. On the one hand it was a purely mental type which Rome was adopting; on the other it was a purely physical type which the rest of Europe was discarding. It was as if Rome and the rest of the world were running a race, starting from the same point and moving in opposite directions. How much greater was the ground covered by Rome in the earlier stages may be gathered from the fact that she had reached her great culminating point of power at a time[1] when Europe as a whole had progressed so little in the direction of interiorization that the only principle which could be made internationally intelligible to her was a principle based solely on the contrary idea of exteriorization.[2]

We have then the spectacle of two contrary types of evolution: on the one hand, Rome, quick to adapt

[1] In the time of Pope Innocent III., 1198.

[2] The first Crusade was preached by Urban in 1095, but it was not till after the second (1138) that the movement received the official support of Rome. The whole movement was really a series of belated national exteriorizations, which had their beginnings outside Rome, and which were largely based, not on religion or morality, but on ideas of world-power. The official patronage which Rome extended to the movement implied an attitude of mind out of which she had long since grown, and which was, as a matter of fact, only forced on her by the rest of Europe as a condition without which she could not have retained her supremacy. As a result the Crusades were unified and their objects made partially moral and religious, but we must not overlook the fact that

bygone forces to her changed possibilities, reconstructing (with apparent success) the old world in the new: on the other, the rest of Europe, scarcely yet aware that any change is in progress, endeavouring with infinite difficulty (and apparent want of success) to throw off the nightmare of the Dark Ages and rise to the light of a new conception. In these two opposing attitudes of mind we see the reasons (1) why Rome, of all places in Europe the most ideally circumstanced—in point of wealth—for the development of music, produced nothing; and (2) why the seed of music, blown hither and thither all over Europe, could yet only find germinating ground in two tiny patches of soil, England and Flanders.

To England was reserved the honour of making the first feeble steps in musical progress, and it is to England that we should naturally look for the (now almost effaced) traces of these footsteps, for it was within the narrow boundaries of her grey seas that men first learnt to dwell together in security and to build up a national system of freedom and justice for all. It was in her isolation that the minds of men first began to turn inwards on the many obstinate questionings that arise in man's dealings with man, and it was from her shores that Europe first heard the voice of a nation crying out, not for blood and plunder, but for a knowledge of the rights, and an alleviation of the sufferings, common to mankind.

The history of England at this time is open to all and its actual details are of no importance except in so far as they show the existence of the changed

the mere offer of a religious basis would not have been sufficient to "universalize" any international movement unless the separate activities and modes-of-thought on which it depended had already been in existence.

condition of national mind which we are studying. In barest outline we may say that, from the accession of Alfred in 871 to the beginning of the eleventh century, it is a history of premature attempts at social development made by a peace-loving people, and a history of continual failure owing to the stern necessities of defence against the Danes. With the easy conquest of William I. in 1066 we enter—though not immediately—upon a period during which the country finds strength against external assault in the fusion of its races, and the possibility of social development in its isolated position. Indeed, we may put it broadly that, from the accession of Henry II. in 1154 till the beginning of the Hundred Years' War in 1337, England enjoyed a period of mixed strength, isolation, and tranquillity, which were the most favourable conditions, not only for the founding of her present social system, but also for the development of music.

Of the music, unfortunately, almost everything is lost, but where in the rest of Europe there is *nothing* left, the *something* left in England is quite enough to show without a shadow of doubt that it was within her borders that the seed of art was first cultivated. The other documents—those which proved her determination to look inwards for the development of her social system—were, in a later age, more valued, and therefore less lightly destroyed; but, even if we had before us every English musical manuscript side by side with the contemporary historical documents[1]

[1] The main historical facts are,—The settlement of peace and order by Henry II., 1154; the reform in judicial administration, 1166; Magna Carta, 1215; the Great Council formally known as "Parliament," 1244; knights first summoned to Parliament, 1254; Simon de Montfort's Parliament in which the boroughs were represented, 1265; first fully representative Parliament, 1295.

that mark the progress of her people, we should not be able to draw more than our present deduction: that the two things occurred at about the same time, and that it was inevitable, music being what it is, that they should so occur.

But though it was given to England to advance the art in its earliest and most primitive stages, farther she was forbidden to go. The outbreak of the Hundred Years' War in 1337 marked for her the beginning of an era in which the whole national energy was absorbed in a new and strangely useless field of exteriorization. Like the rest of Europe she was in a condition of "world-atavism." On the one hand, the motives which, in the previous thousand years, had impelled whole peoples to march out to new settling-grounds existed no longer; on the other, the motives which were to cause wholesale emigration in the future had not yet come into play. Instead of these we find a third and intermediate type of exteriorization in which the nation supports the ambitions and intrigues of princes and dynasties, not from any pressing necessity of its own existence, but from a sort of "throwing-back" of the national consciousness.

Hence come endless wars and expeditions, undertaken for no reason that the people can understand, waged at the expense of much blood and treasure which belong to the people, and resulting in no gain which the people can set off against their losses. This type of national exteriorization, which is common throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, is well represented by the history of our French wars. To sum these up we may say that at the beginning of this history the English owned England and the French owned France; that then a great number of English-

men and Frenchmen shot and hacked each other to pieces: that the glorious names of Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt were added to the brilliant roll of English victories, while the no less glorious names of Pontvallain, Formigny, and Castillon were added to the equally brilliant roll of French victories; and that the end of the whole matter was that the English still owned England and the French still owned France.

But this was not all; for a century of wasted national life was accompanied and succeeded by an era of deep popular discontent, and out of this grew a confused and miserable series of events—murders, insurrections, and so on—of which we may take Jack Cade's Rebellion and the Wars of the Roses, in England, and the Jacquerie, in France, as types. At such a time as this there is, of course, little hope of considered musical development in England. Her moment of poise has gone by, and the national mind has to work under external conditions antipathetic to music. We must therefore turn elsewhere for the next developments in the art. It is to Rome that we should naturally turn if mere wealth were the only essential factor for this development. But, as I have already pointed out, though we find in Rome all the material conditions of prosperity, they are accompanied and indeed caused by a mental exteriorization which tends to increase just as the physical exteriorization of the rest of Europe tends to decrease. We must, then, look to Europe outside Rome for the next development in music, and we must therefore endeavour to reconstruct, in its barest possible form, the history of Europe from about 1000 to the early years of the sixteenth century.

As I write I have before me a complete history of the external national activities in Europe during the

500 years under discussion. This list—which can be dug out of any general history—is far too long to print here. Its main characteristic is the shedding of blood by means of an interminable series of blind and senseless forays, civil wars, feuds, quarrels, sea and land expeditions, invasions, counter-invasions, attacks and repulses, accompanied by every imaginable and unimaginable form of deceit, intrigue, coalition, lying, treachery, and murder. Besides the Crusades there are civil wars in Spain, England, Denmark, and the Netherlands; invasions of France and Spain by England, and of Italy by France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, and the Holy Roman Empire; wars and battles between Spain and France, between Spain and the Moors, between France and England, between Austrians and Swiss, between Venetians and Turks, between Genoese and Venetians, between Germans and Danes; wars of the Holy Roman Empire with Poles, Burgundians, Bohemians, Hungarians, Turks, Saxons, and with the Lombard League; coalitions and quarrels between Popes and Emperors; glorious entries of allied forces into various towns (about which entries history says much) and their subsequent inglorious exit (about which history says very little); endless, hopeless tangle of internal warfare in Italy; sackings, plunderings, pillagings and burnings of cities; in a word, an almost complete and generally useless abandonment to the idea of blood, fire, and iron.

I say "generally useless," because of all these expenditures of national energy not one in fifty had any lasting national effect. Their type is to be seen in the fourteenth century English interference with France and Spain—interferences that bled all three countries of men and treasure and left them at the end precisely as they were at the beginning. We can only

account for these activities as a kind of atavistic desire to move outwards, a desire which, in the Dark Ages, was prompted by the growing pressure of population, by the need of a larger food supply or by the threatenings of foreign invasion, and which had now, in the Middle Ages, ingrained itself in the consciousness of nations as a useless and pernicious habit.

In all this long history of aimless national outreaching only three moments of national pause can be found sufficiently long to allow of musical development. These three moments are, in the main, all subsequent to the earliest period of English productivity, and they occur in as many countries—Spain, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands.

(*a*) In Spain, towards the end of the thirteenth century, there was such a moment of tranquillity in which a great advancement of learning took place. But, if we wish to find the reason why no music was developed there at that time, we must remember that the musical thought-processes are very slow and that they demand, for their incubation and development, long periods of comparative rest. I do not mean to say that the culture of music calls for a complete cessation of external national activities—for, if that were so, no national music could ever be developed; nor do I mean to say that single exteriorizations of the national mind can affect, except in a very slight degree, the progress of the art; but I think we may say, viewing history in its broadest aspect, that the art demands for its successful exercise long periods in which the general average trend of the national mind is inwards. In Spain, at the period which we are considering, there was a moment of pause, long as the lifetime of man counts, but very short in the lifetime of art. This momentary pause, too, was preceded by

a long era of Mohammedan warfare, and succeeded by the civil wars of the fourteenth century which ended with the expulsion of the English (under John of Gaunt) in 1387. The following century was, in Spain, a period of continual national expansion and glory, which culminated in two events—one, of great importance to Spain; the other, of equal importance to the whole world—the end of the Moorish dominion in 1491, and the discovery of America in 1492.

Spain's period of tranquillity was, then, far too short to admit the possibility of musical advance. Throughout the fourteenth century she was continually distracted by wars, and in the fifteenth we can observe in her the first faint beginnings of that new type of exteriorization which was to mark the difference between the modern and the mediaeval world and to govern the whole progress of modern music. With this new attitude of mind I shall deal more fully in the fourth period, contenting myself now with saying that it was the dawning consciousness of a possible new something outside Europe altogether.

(*b*) A similar period of pause may be found in Scandinavia following on the Union of Kalmar which united Norway, Sweden, and Denmark under Margaret in 1397. Of this period I shall have less to say, partly because its extreme shortness—about half a century—made any musical development unlikely, but principally because then, as now, the inhabitants of the Scandinavian peninsula were prevented by the mere force of geographical position from acquiring the wealth and leisure necessary to musical progress. This comparative poverty is, of course, a constant negative factor in artistic development. That the possession of wealth is not *the* positive factor

determining musical advance I have already shown, but—without explanation—the proof of this fact can be seen by a simple comparison of a nation's activities in music and commerce. The music cannot, indeed, exist unless the general mass of the people enjoys a certain measure of material prosperity ; but the mere accumulation of wealth does not ensure its production.[1]

(*c*) It was to the Netherlands that the golden opportunity was vouchsafed of watching over the childhood of music, the latest born of the arts, and, as (from every other point of view but that of the balance of national forces) it would have seemed wildly improbable that so great a development could take place in so small a country,[2] it is well to look somewhat closely into its history. Fortunately this is an extremely simple matter.

The Netherlands, as we loosely use the term, contains within its boundaries two distinct types of country. The first (modern Holland) is a narrow strip of sea-board, made up of endless indentations, bays, outlets, river-mouths, and islands ; the second (modern Belgium) is an inland country, about equal in actual area to the first, but having only one short strip of sea-coast unprovided with any natural conveniences for shipping. The boundaries of these two

[1] We may note, in passing, how strong is the tendency of a wealthy and musically unproductive nation to devote a part of its wealth to the support of some sort—even when it is not its own sort—of music. This can be seen in the foreign (Flemish) schools at Rome (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), and in the continual pressure of foreign (generally, but not invariably, German) musicians in England since the seventeenth century.

[2] The area of modern Belgium (11,373 sq. miles) is about equal to that of Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire : (modern) Holland is about one-tenth larger (12,582 sq. miles).

countries have been continually joined and disjoined, and their political history has included union, disunion, and foreign domination. It is important to note that these unions have been purely artificial, and that, throughout them all, the two distinct types of country have always been, and are still, inhabited by two distinct types of people—the one to the north sprung from an ancient Germanic tribe (the Batavi); the one to the south from an ancient Gothic tribe (the Burgundi).

This difference of race, accentuated by centuries of differing environment, shows itself as plainly to-day as it did in the fourteenth century. In physique, in religion, and in art the two peoples differ totally. In the north we have a race (the Hollanders) whose activities are conditioned by their sea-line. Their national habit-of-mind is always from within outwards. The consequence is that their imaginative energies are absorbed in producing (first) a race of sailors, overseas explorers and administrators, (second) a long line of engineers and scientists, and (third) a school of workers in those arts which depend for their primary impulses on the external stimuli of the senses, that is to say, painters, carvers, litterateurs, and so on. In the south we have a race which exhibits precisely opposite national characteristics. The primary difference is, as I have said, one of race, but it is a difference which is continually widened by a geographical environment; for, though the two peoples, the Dutch and the Flemings, both live on a flat surface without mountains, in the case of the latter there is no all-pervading water access. The result is a people of a more reflective type of mind; not less religious, but with a different type of religion; not less active, but much less active externally; a people, in short, inclined,

whenever the turmoil of international conflict permits it, to turn its mind inwards, and consequently a people incapable of many sorts of greatness, but capable of this one sort of greatness—music.

To a people of this contemplative nature it was a congenial task to take music as it stood in 1300 and substitute for its haphazard empiricism an ordered and well-considered system. We must not, however, overlook the point that other nations existed then, as they exist now, with a similar national tendency towards the reflective, but that in their case it was not possible for them to cultivate and enforce this habit of mind in face of the generally contrary tendency of Europe unless they were prepared to lose their existence as a nation.

On the other hand, it is easy to recognize in mediaeval Flanders the first occurrence in history of that combination of circumstances necessary for the development of music—sufficient wealth with a prolonged and complete absence of external activities. Indeed, from the rise of the Communes in the twelfth century down to the early years of the sixteenth century, Flanders is happy in having no external history of European importance, and an internal history of quiet, peaceful industry, and of improving social and political conditions that presume the existence of the very type of mind most likely to foster music. There is some record during this period of internal commotion, of a town revolting here,[1] of a political separation there[2] (Holland going one way, Hainault another), but, except for two alliances, both made for reasons of defence,[3] we may say that, on the few occasions during this period when her history touches

[1] *E.g.* Ghent in 1381. [2] In 1354.
[3] In both cases (1337 and 1468) with England.

the general history of Europe, it is not caused by her external activity, but by intrusion into her dominions.

We are now in a position to understand how it was that Flanders was able to produce so long and distinguished a line of musicians, and it is noteworthy that, though the majority of them lived and worked in Rome, the supply was not recruited from the sons of Romanized Flemings, but directly from Flanders itself. This is an interesting point, especially to Englishmen and Americans, in whose countries the process can still be seen under their own eyes. A foreign musician comes to either of these countries and exercises his abilities there as executant or composer with a complete detachment from his surroundings. His whole life-work presumes for its basis the existence of a (foreign) developed musical culture elsewhere. But, if such a man actually settles in the country his son becomes, as a rule, a purely English (or American) citizen, perhaps with some slight Platonic attachment to the art of his forefathers, but on the whole taking his artistic level from the culture around him.

There is, indeed, a striking analogy between the cases of fourteenth and fifteenth century Rome and eighteenth and nineteenth century England. In each case we see a people whose energies are devoted to some form or other of exteriorization, groaning under the imposition of a foreign culture. In each case, too, we see the home nation making desperate attempts to throw off the burden and to substitute a truly national culture. Of the great world-changes which accompanied (and made possible) the Roman success in this field I shall have more to say in dealing with the next (the modern) period, but meanwhile I may point out that, as the factors remain unaltered,

we may be quite sure that the methods employed to support the Flemish School in Rome must have been very much the methods employed by the Frenchman, the German, and the Italian in present-day England. In each case we must perhaps allow something for the momentum of an established school which is making headway, and for the inertia of its rival which is at a stand-still.

These points are, however, rather matters of detail that serve to explain the failures and vindicate the successes of a nation. In the long run it will be found that it is the national habit of mind and that alone which makes a school of music possible or impossible.

Before leaving this topic I must dwell for a moment on the fact that it was Rome, in particular, that was selected as the scene of the Flemish activity. This is true in a large sense, though a few distinguished Flemings seem to have passed at any rate a portion of their active lives in Flanders and elsewhere. The importance of the point does not, however, lie in the fact that the Flemings wrote in Rome—for that is explained by the fact that Rome was the wealthiest and, ecclesiastically, the best equipped city in mediaeval Europe, and therefore attracted foreigners to her service, just as London, Paris, and New York have in modern times—but in the fact that the Romans *did not write* in Rome.

It is not possible in a sketch such as I am giving to detail the services which Flanders rendered to the cause of music in general. Briefly, they served to co-ordinate into a scientific system the vague and aimless wanderings which had till then robbed music of all character. The Flemings, so to speak, *begot* music as we know it now. They gave it a back-bone.

And, if from our present standpoint the back-bone seems a trifle stiff, we must remember that, before their time, music was in the least organic state possible, a mere collection of cells without apparent connection or seeming possibility of development.

(4) The Modern Period (1500 to the Present Day).

In 1492 occurred an event which changed the history of the world—the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. This discovery introduced into Europe a new and unexpected factor which had the effect, not only of altering the outlook of certain nations, but also of rearranging the international relationships of the Old World. Hitherto the eyes of Europe had been continually turned towards one or other of the great Continental centres, and the external activities of nations—since the early days of the Roman Empire—had been a series of marches and counter-marches *by land.*

In a developed position such as this, England was nothing but a speck in the ocean, a speck practically unapproachable, and so isolated from any real communion with the general interests of Europe. The other nations, whose borders looked westward across the sea—Holland, Spain, and (modern) Portugal—were, indeed, more in touch with the common activities of their times, but their actual water frontiers, so far from being a source of wealth or a means of energy, were merely so many miles of useless and dangerous coast-line. But, with the discovery of America, the balance of world-power changes. The long history of national exteriorization *within* Europe has now ceased, and the new era is an era of expansion *by sea.*

The nations which I have named sprang, almost at once, into an unlooked-for prominence. Their coasts, no longer the debateable ground of fishermen and pirates, became bases for that long catalogue of adventure and discovery which makes up the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To England in especial, placed as she was in the very gateway of the setting sun, and looking both towards the Old World and the New, the changed circumstances brought a changed national life. No longer isolated—except in an etymological sense—each of her children could find, within a few miles of his home, those broad sea-paths which were now not the dividing but the connecting lines of Empire. The Mediterranean was now no longer *the* sea but only *a* sea, and this fact, broadening on the consciousness of Europe, made the new age an era, not of land-power, but of sea-power.

With the general political effects of this new factor, and with the details of discovery and overseas expansion I shall, of course, not deal here; but the sudden discovery of a large and unsuspected area for national exteriorization had so strong an effect on the musical productivity of Europe that I must endeavour to show the relationship of the one with the other.

Before doing this, however, it is necessary to say a word as to the date which I have chosen for the beginning of the modern period. The reader may have noticed that, in placing the line of division between the mediaeval and the modern periods as 1500, I have anticipated musical history by exactly 100 years. It might be thought that the year 1600 —the year of the great musical disruption which was to overthrow the old polyphony and establish in time the modern melodic school—should have been chosen

as a more accurate date. We must, however, remember that the year 1600 is a purely artificial dividing line selected by musicians solely on technical grounds which, though of great interest to composers, are by no means integral to a comparative study of music and nationalism.

In addition to this I think it is plain that, if we attempt to reconstruct musical history only from a study of its technicalities and without reference to the real factors which condition its existence, we are bound to be faced at every turn with artistic phenomena which are practically inexplicable. Such enigmas occur in the inability of England to follow Italy's lead after the later years of the sixteenth century, and in the puzzling appearance of Palestrina, who takes up a position at the summit of a developed foreign school and, at the same time, bars the path of progress to his countrymen. Viewed from a merely technical standpoint the latter puzzle would seem to be so hopeless that it has never provoked even a guess from musical historians. It is, then, better and more scientific to take the year 1500 as our starting-point, because it was at that date (or thereabouts) that the new force first came into play. We must not, however, forget that a force of this kind exerts at first only a very slight pressure, and, even when the existence of the force is consciously recognized—as it was in the case of the discovery of America—its effect at the outset on politics and society appears to be small, and on music nil.

Hence it comes that, in 1500, we find Europe standing at the parting of the ways. From that time forward the new factor assumes a continually increasing importance. Its effect on Spain, Portugal, Holland, and England is to place them irrevocably in

the class of musically sterile nations. Its effect on such a country as Italy is to throw her hopelessly out of the running for world-power, and, in the process of doing this, to bring into play her other activities as a musically fertile nation. It is as if a mischievous fate were playing pranks with a magic lantern, focussing on to the screen a new set of people suitable for the new possibilities of Empire, and, at the same time, inscrutably taking care that to those who had just been dissolved into darkness should be entrusted the duty of expressing (in art) the new conditions of the world.

In length of time this process may be said to have occupied the greater part of the sixteenth century, and its history may be seen most strikingly in Italy.[1] Throughout the greater portion of the fifteenth century that country had been the scene of a five-cornered fight for power—Milan, Venice, Florence, and Naples contending impartially with each other and with the Papal States. With the turn of the century the political situation changed. The position of the Pope as a European power had waned continually since the great days of the early thirteenth century, and now he was to feel the shock of a storm which had been gathering for 200 years.[2]

At this moment two enemies appeared on the threshold of Italy—France[3] and Spain. A long

[1] Even up to the time of Palestrina's middle-life (1550 or thereabouts) the work of his Roman contemporaries was practically indistinguishable from that of the Flemish School. At the same date the Schools of Lombardy and Venice were just beginning to break away from the leading-strings of Flemish tradition.

[2] The immediate cause of the Reformation was the authorization of the "Sale of Indulgences" in 1517.

[3] French enter Italy, 1494. Formation of the "Holy League" against France, 1511.

record of bloodshed followed, during which the Pope formed alliances and cross-alliances, at one time with the Emperor[1] against France and Spain, and at another with France[2] in order to detach her from the Spanish Alliance. The outcome of the whole bitter struggle was that, though France was often successful from the mere military point of view, by the middle of the century she had been forced to retire within her own borders, and Spain had subjugated, and was ruling Italy.[3] Under her iron heel the dissonant elements of Italian politics were ground into silence. The city-states, which had been jumping-off grounds for the ambitions of this or that petty tyrant—Visconti, Scala, Este, Sforza, and Medici—were now, in the sixteenth century, forced to learn the lessons in civility which, in such a country as England, had been mastered 500 years before. Even the Papacy, sapped by the approach of forces which it did not understand, and threatened from within by the accumulated hatred and distrust of four centuries, could effect nothing by its frantic outburst of political activity, and was compelled to see the victorious Spaniard enter Rome.[4]

We may, then, say that Italy first felt the impact of the new ideas in the shape of a back-handed blow delivered by that very nation which was the pioneer of those ideas. The blow soon took effect, not only in the field of politics, but in that of musical art. For 300 years her mental attitude had been one of nervous, jealous exteriorization—petty as we regard

[1] Charles V., 1521. [2] *Temp.* Henry II., 1555.

[3] Peace of Cateau-Cambresis, 1559. The dominion of Spain continued, in one form or another, down to about 1650. The French were excluded from Italy by the Treaty of Lyons, 1601.

[4] 1527.

such things now, and infinitely subdivided in its activity—but still fierce, determined, and vivid. In these 300 years she had produced all that was greatest in architecture, carving, poetry, and painting. Now, when the whole national life was depressed to a much lower plane of external activity, when the heat of her many contending cities and the red-hot glow of her one master-city were brought down below fusing-point, she was to produce the first great musician of her long line of great musicians.

We must not then regard Palestrina as a freak-figure appearing strangely and incomprehensibly at the topmost point of a foreign-developed art form, and crying to his children for an immediate denial of his life-work, but as a figure of flesh and blood whose production was made inevitable by the organic changes of his time in world-power. We must rid our minds of any artificial obsession on this point brought about by the accident that it was necessary for his successors to change the technical character of music. If music could be detached from the circumstances of national life we might be compelled to view Palestrina as an inexplicable figure coming from nowhere and leading nowhither. Such a view has neither logic nor reason. Indeed, the less we trouble with the technicalities of music the better. The all-important point is the national condition under which the artist works, and, if we keep this point steadily before us, we shall recognize in Palestrina the strictly logical outcome of his century—the first Italian, not, indeed, to work in the field of music, but to work in the field of music under the new settlement and with the new interiorizing power of the national mind; the first Italian, therefore, to express the Italian genius in music, and to pass on to his successors, not his mere technique,

but the possibility of continued musical expression in the future.

I have already pointed out that, however quickly conscious of impending change were the western nations of Europe, this change could not, by any human means, take effect in art except after the lapse of many years. The actual length of this period would be of no importance were it not that in the sixteenth century the musical history of Europe presents certain puzzling characteristics which appear, at first sight, to deny the connection between musical development and world-power. I may state at once that the two apparent difficulties are (1) the existence in Rome, during the first half of the sixteenth century, of a school of Spanish musicians; and (2) the existence, in the same century, of a partially national school of music in England.

These two apparent "sports of nature" may very well be considered together in a comparison with each other and with the rest of sixteenth century European music, for, though they have little likeness to each other artistically, they exhibit in their origin and in their historical surroundings so strange an identity that, after considering their circumstances, we shall be forced to acknowledge them, not as a contradiction to our proposition, but as a strong testimony in its favour.

In dealing with this question we must not forget that, apart from the one great exteriorizing factor which had been introduced in 1492, the sixteenth century was a century favourable and not antagonistic to musical progress. Within Europe the exteriorizing tendencies of the secular nations had sunk almost to vanishing point, and the Papacy itself, enfeebled by the loss, or the impending loss, of the Protestant

countries, was compelled, in its struggle for life, to search out some means by which these tendencies could be goaded into action. The times had indeed changed since the days of the Crusades when a religious basis for external action was a mere pretext offered to a half-savage world bent only on adventure and slaughter. Europe had become educated; for, while Rome was still endeavouring to stay up her trembling hands in a last weak defence of an empire which had been founded on ideas of exteriorization, and which was now decaying away from inability to keep touch with the altered mind of the modern world, Europe found herself unable to accept the Roman exhortation to action except when it was based—by a bitter contradiction—on the one most intimate and subjective activity of the mind, religion.

The century was, then, within Europe, an era of partial exteriorization based on a newly acquired national habit of interiorization. It was, in short, a century of religious wars, a century of the most horrible cruelty and bloodshed, of exterminations, pillagings, burnings, and tortures, instigated by Rome and carried out through her approved agents. The result of these religious wars was—like that of the Anglo-French wars in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—precisely nil; the people who had disagreed with Rome before the wars and persecutions began still disagreed with her when they had ended. But, though these wars are for us only a detestable catalogue of crime, we must not overlook the fact that their existence, as based on religion, is evidence of a changed condition of mind in Europe, and it was this very change of mental attitude that made the century favourable, on the whole, to musical production.

This musical production actually took place, as we

know ; but it is curious that, in a small degree, there was a musical development in two of the nations which were to benefit most largely by the conditions of the new era—Spain and England. The important thing to note here is that, if we were placed as spectators on the dividing line of 1492 and asked to deduce, from their national circumstances, the names of the nations most likely to develop the art during the succeeding 300 years, we should undoubtedly, from general considerations of national prosperity and security, name England, Holland, and Spain. The fact, however, remains that, of these three nations one (the Dutch) made no development at all ; that the Spanish, already favourably established at Rome, after making a partial attempt to develop the Flemish music there, suddenly and completely ceased all musical activity ; and that the English, with more time and leisure at their disposal, succeeded in a slightly higher degree in establishing the beginnings of a national school, and then ceased their musical development as suddenly and mysteriously as the Spanish. Of these three countries England (the most musically productive) is also the most removed from religious conflict ; Spain (the less musically productive) is also the more involved in religious wars ; while Holland (musically unproductive) is the country most completely overwhelmed by them. It is also worthy of remark that, of these three nations, the two least productive (Holland and Spain) were the two who earliest grasped the possibility of sea-power ;[1] the English, who were in future

[1] Already, in 1541, the Dutch were able to equip a large and powerful fleet for Charles's expedition against Tunis and Algiers. The Spanish and Portuguese naval establishments date from nearly fifty years earlier.

ages to carry this possibility to its furthest limits, were much slower in coming to this understanding.[1]

It would, of course, be wholly alien to my intention in these chapters, and, indeed, a ludicrous perversion of history, to attempt to cite individual historical events as conditioning or causing individual artistic movements, and we may therefore take the broad, and I think true, view of the circumstances, and, regarding this century as a transitional period, see, in the partial development of the Spanish and English schools, an "overthrow" from the preceding century. Such an "overthrow" is nothing more than the persistence of a national habit of mind unable to accommodate itself at once to changing circumstances, and therefore demanding an expression of itself in music which (when judged in the light of strict historical data) appears to be an anachronism.

Of these "overthrows," which sometimes persist for the greater part of a century, we can cite examples which may serve to illustrate the position. The continuance of the (decadent) polyphonic school in Italy (seventeenth century) after its vitality had been sapped by the new monodic school (in 1600) is a case in point. The musical mind, by a sort of inertia, seemed unable to recognize the existence of its new conditions, and therefore continued to offer the world a semi-mediaeval type of music which was as much an anachronism in the seventeenth century as the Spanish and English schools were in the sixteenth. It is important, however, that we should not distinguish between these two curious historical situations as being (in

[1] Drake's voyage round the world, 1577. Date of the Armada, 1588.

the earlier case) a "throwing forward" and (in the later case) a "throwing back" of the mind. Each of these is a case of "overthrow" or "persistence," and the difference between them is only that in the one case (the sixteenth century) it is the active or exteriorizing faculty of mind which cannot at once give up its momentum; while in the other case (the seventeenth century) it is the interiorizing or music-producing faculty which shows the same inertia.

The broad fact of the matter is that England and Spain were able to take artistic advantage of their (temporary) impenetrability to the new ideas of world-power, and to produce an amount of music in strict proportion to this and to their material opportunities. These ideas were naturally slow to filter into the national consciousness, but the important point is that the more they did filter the more difficult became the production of music. When they had actually soaked down as deep as the musical mind of Europe, and when that mind had begun to attempt an expression of the great world-changes, it was found that the nations whose imaginations and energies were devoted to the external activities of the new era were unable to invent or even adopt the new technique by which alone it could be symbolized in music; and so by the compensation of fate the nations who were forbidden to share in the new dominion of the world were granted the privilege of expressing that dominion in art.

We may then summarize our facts with regard to the fourth period as follows:

(1) The static condition of nations within Europe, that is to say, the absence of any large national exteriorization involving new arrangements of physical boundaries or of ideas.

(2) The consequence of this as seen in the general cultivation of music throughout the period (with the exception of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, practically every nation, Italian, German, French, Austrian, Bohemian, Hungarian, Russian, and Finnish, takes some part in this culture, varying partly with their material circumstances, but especially with the opportunities which they enjoy for quiet reflection).

(3) The discovery of a new field for national exteriorization outside Europe.[1]

(4) The consequence of this as seen in the emergence of Spain, Portugal, Holland, and England as exteriorizing, and therefore, despite their wealth, musically-unproductive nations.

(5) The substitution of sea-power for land-power,[2] which is so axiomatic of the period down to the present time that it may almost be said that national musical productivity is in inverse ratio to sea-power.

The above are the general conditions governing the development of music during the modern period.

[1] I have not dwelt on the discoveries and conquests in Asia only because they are unimportant from our (musical) point of view as being contained in the other type,—that of western exteriorization.

[2] This statement needs no argumentative support, but, if the reader wishes to contrast the conditions of the modern world with those of the ancient, he may take two such decisive land-battles as those of "Châlons" and "Tours" and compare their *vitality* with that of any sea-fight which he may select in the Dark or the Middle Ages. In the modern period he will find the conditions exactly reversed. All the blood spilled in the wars of Marlborough and Napoleon, in the Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars, means less to Europe than the victory of the Christians over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, than Nelson's victories, or than the British naval supremacy at the time of the Boer war.

There are many points which it would be interesting to pursue in detail. Such are, the weakness of the Italian mind (about 1600) in all that field of aesthetic activity which depends for its inception on external stimuli, and the consequent ease with which she was able to shoulder the burden of modern musical development: the segregation of Central Europe (1600-1870) and her complete ignorance during that time of the change which was taking place from land- to sea-power: the striking effect of this as seen in the development of the Teutonic School of music:[1] the possible effect in Germany of her more recent leanings towards Colonial expansion: the curiously balanced and seemingly chronic state of mental exteriorization combined with physical interiorization in France which has made her the most unsuccessful colonizer[2] in the world, and has enabled her to maintain a continuous school of music always characteristically French, but often the work of foreigners: the reasons (of climate and soil?) which have caused Russia's music to be so minute in quantity compared with the number of her inhabitants: the recent musical activity in Finland at a moment when her big, silent neighbour is watching her so closely: and finally, the question, of great interest to England, whether, when no further physical possibilities of exteriorization remain, her Empire and its inhabitants will ever assume the static condition which makes musical development possible.

All these are questions of great interest, but I

[1] Wagner said of Bach, "He is the history of the German spirit's inmost life throughout the gruesome century of the German folk's complete extinction."

[2] Like Spain, Holland, and Portugal, she is an *older* colonizing power than England.

shall deal with none of them here for two reasons: first, because the advances in music, however vast they may seem to us who are near at hand, are only developments of and additions to the musical structure as it existed before 1500. They do not (as far as we yet know) include any fundamentally new discovery on which a new method of expression may possibly be based. There has been no musical invention since the early Middle Ages to compare, in importance, with the discovered possibility of two simultaneous melodies. It is still only matter for interesting speculation whether a time will not come when the cup of scientific harmony and counterpoint, as we now know them, will not be filled to overflowing, and when the need will arise of some new basis for development. Of this grasping out towards a musical "fourth dimension" there may be, even now, some faint signs; but, if we can be certain of anything from historical analogy, we may be sure that any such departure will be the work of generations.[1]

The second reason why I am not discussing the detailed interaction of world-power and music is its simplicity and uniformity during the whole period. Europe divides itself into two sets of nations—those

[1] It must not be overlooked that, though it is about 1000 years since discant was invented, there is no real sign (even in the most elaborate modern orchestral music) that Europe is prepared to accept a system of composition based on any other principle than that of the prominence—at any given moment—of a single "voice" or "part." There are some few and very doubtful instances to the contrary (as, for instance in Strauss's later works), but, even if we allow these, they are rarely of more than momentary occurrence, and, so far as one knows, there is no complete musical work at the present time written on such a basis. "Music and melody" are still, in Wagner's words "inseparable,—it being impossible to conceive the one without the other."

who are musically unproductive because they are devoted to the exteriorization of their energies, and those who are productive when (not *because*) this factor is absent from their national life. Speaking broadly, we may say that there are two opposite conditions under which a nation may attempt to develop music. In the first—the negative condition—there is a distinct "pull" against the music-producing faculties; in the second—the positive condition—we have no more than the absence of the negative "pull," and this does not in every case ensure the production of music, because there are a great number of local circumstances which must offer a fair average of possibility before the art can progress. If we grant the absence of this negative "pull," we may put it that every nation tends to produce a music of its own, and that this music, developed according to the varying possibilities of different peoples, bears to the developed international consciousness of Europe a relation similar to that which the folk-song bore to the undeveloped consciousness of mediaeval Europe. We have, then, a sort of musically-positive condition, as represented by the folk-song stage of musical culture, and this condition has been normal and universal. The production from it of a developed art is also normal, but not universal. Under the abnormal musical condition of exteriorization it ceases to take place, and under the restrictive influence of adverse physical circumstances it becomes something less than universal.

CHAPTER IV

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

In the foregoing chapters I have endeavoured to arrive at an explanation of the conditions governing the development of music. The production of music has too often been regarded both by historians and students as a wholly detached form of artistic activity. This attitude on their part—based perhaps upon a true, if unconscious, realization of the psychological, and therefore historical, differences between music and the other arts—has resulted in our present musical history—a history careful and precise in its dates and details, but so perplexing in its relation to the other national activities as apparently to forbid even a guess as to the "why" and "wherefore" of its existence.

Even in the most modern histories one can find no recognition of the vital necessity for some such explanation. Within the particular circle of technical musical history the events are all duly chronicled as they occur; but when the necessity arises, as it must constantly arise, of explaining some strange case of arrested development, the historian, unwilling to move outside his own particular field of enquiry, either leaves us with no explanation or else bolsters up for us some one or other of the "proximate causes" which have been the lying commonplaces of musical history since first it was written.

This is the more to be regretted in English musical history, and especially in English operatic history, where, if anywhere, there is striking need of a real explanation of this arrested development, and it is with the intention of offering a first suggestion, in the broadest manner possible, that I have made the above long but necessary digression from my main topic.

It must, then, be understood that the chief reason why England has, in general, been appreciative and not productive of a developing musical school during the past 300 years is not that she has been less "musical" than any other nation, or that she has been engaged in doing other things, in commerce, industry, poetry, painting, and so on, but that she has been expending her energy during that time in the one special form of national exteriorization which is fundamentally and psychologically opposed to the production of music.[1]

The application of this principle in England has,

[1] The personal application of this antagonistic environment to the individual composer has been made by many writers. Dr. Ernest Walker, in his *History of Music in England*, refers (p. 26) to Dunstable's lack of influence on his own countrymen; he comments (p. 183) on the "curious partiality" of the English for "foreign traditions"; see also his note on Pierson, that "isolated figure of ineffectual revolt" (pp. 270 and 282), and his criticism of Bennett (p. 268) as "the great instance in music of a man who might have reached real greatness being slowly but very effectually killed by his environment." One may note that this environment is largely made up of the conscious (and often belated) appreciation of foreign music, and that this appreciation has shifted from class to class in uniformity with the shifting of political power. Thus, when the initiative on external matters was wholly in the hands of the Court circle, we find a ridiculous devotion to French ideals (*temp.* Charles II.); later on we get the aristocratic cult of Handel and J. C. Bach, and later still the democratic worship of many strange gods, good and bad—Clementi, Dussek, Cramer, Moscheles, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Tschaikowsky.

except as an example, no bearing on the general history of European music. To us, however, as students of our own country, it is interesting to see the actual form which the struggle took, and to note how musical and national philosophy is justified by the two widely differing types of culture in Italy and England. For, as soon as the former country felt the power of her great central fire waning; as soon as her jarring States were reconciled to the impossibility of their own aggrandisement; as soon as she learnt, in the face of the French and Spanish invaders, the hopelessness of mere external empire, she entered into another and greater kingdom, where she has held sway for 300 years. In England, on the other hand, the same set of world-causes operated to produce a precisely opposite effect; for, as the Italian fell asleep to the possibilities of external empire, so the Englishman awoke, and from that day to this his musical history has been the history of a struggle against foreign domination.

We have now to turn from these general considerations to the more special study of Opera, and particularly of Opera as it affected the national consciousness of England. As is well known, Opera was invented in Italy about the year 1600 as a conscious attempt on the part of a few "classicists" to revive the Greek drama. Its subjects, wholly taken from antiquity, called for and received a new mode of expression distinct from, and opposed to, anything which had gone before.[1] The view of the earliest Operatic composers was that, in a Greek

[1] This was the "Monodic School," a (successful) artificial creation which can only find an analogy in the (unsuccessful) attempts made in Queen Elizabeth's reign to found a school of English poetry on the basis of Greek and Latin rhythms.

drama, the whole of the play, even the iambic speeches and dialogue, was *sung*. They were, therefore, compelled to invent a new method of expression, which would not only suit the lyrical and reflective moments in the drama, but also the necessary "connecting links"—that is to say, the purely intellectual explanations (of physical and psychological facts)—which lead up to the lyrical situations, and without which the reason for these situations cannot be made apparent to the audience.

In doing this they invented the Lyrical Drama.

We must particularly note the "duality" of this musical art-form, because it is just in its inability to face the musical necessities of these "connecting links" that we shall find the English mind differing from the Italian. To this point I shall return later, mentioning meanwhile that during the whole of the seventeenth century Italy was engaged in elaborating and transforming the art-form which she had invented. In England during the first half of the century there was practically no recognition of the fundamental idea which formed the basis of Italian Opera—that is to say, the necessity of declamatory-recitative or song-speech. Music was, indeed, written to many dramas; but this music evaded the problem by ignoring its existence. It was, in fact, either dragged into a masque as an additional attraction to the gorgeous "costuming" and "properties," or, if it rose to any higher level, it merely served as an illustration of the central situations or as an apology for their absence.

There can be no doubt that this style of entertainment, then as now, was well suited to the English temperament. Nor was it possible for even the most gifted musician of his age to effect any permanent change in this peculiarly national habit of mind.

Between 1670 and 1695 Henry Purcell had faced the problem of lyrical drama and found a solution of its difficulties perhaps more satisfactory and artistic than any which had been offered by his contemporaries or predecessors. In addition, he had approached his task from a purely English point of view, and had attained to a purely English mode of expression which, in melodic charm, in vivacity of word-painting, and in the general firm handling of situations, was more mature and masterly than any other then existing in Europe.

At his death[1] the position was full of possibilities for the English people. They had produced an isolated master and had received from him, as a legacy, a sword tempered to their use by his own cunning. Within ten years of his death the invader was to come from Italy. The question, as we can now see it in all its vividness, was this: would the Englishman draw the sword that had been bequeathed to him, re-sharpen it to his own needs, and use it to repel the invader?

Let us see what happened.

The first Italian Opera was produced in London in 1705. Its effect was striking and immediate. The public and the professional musical classes were at once broken up into three distinct sets whose intrigues and counter-intrigues, squabbles and reconciliations, still echo in their literature and even their advertisements, across two centuries. Of these three sets one was friendly and two were hostile to the new form of art. All three, however, are of the greatest interest to us both from the philosophical and the historical standpoint, because they mirror for us, not only the diversity of national outlook with

[1] In 1695.

which the English greeted the first appearance of Italian Opera in their midst, but also the three types of mind which have existed here all through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and which are now—in the twentieth—persistent factors in our artistic life.

I.

First of all comes the aristocratic class, negligible from the standpoint of musical philosophy but important from that of musical history, because its members had, as they still have, the money and the power to maintain in exotic and ridiculous pre-eminence any foreign culture of which they approved. They were, it must be remembered, not only the richest, but also the most travelled aristocracy in Europe, and they brought home from their travels a cosmopolitan veneer and a species of intellectual snobbery which was the one deforming characteristic of their mixed breed. These people, the most vitalized in all that concerns our national history were, as they still are, artistically the most de-nationalized. They wished to be amused pleasantly and lazily, and if in doing so they could at the same time hall-mark their amusement with the stamp of exclusiveness, they counted it so much to the good. They received Italian Opera, therefore, not with understanding minds, but with open arms and—what was of still greater importance to the Italian artist—open purses.

Their fathers had been glad to sit behind His Olive-complexioned Majesty and watch his two dozen fiddlers scraping through the English Church service under the direction of Mons. Humfrey: they had been more than glad to present themselves at Whitehall in the hope of hearing the "French page-boy"

singing his love-songs at one of those pleasantly uncalvinistic after-dinner-sociables in which His Majesty seems to have been peculiarly accessible to all and sundry. Their sons therefore only needed to bring into artistic action the heavy pieces of heredity with which they had been accustomed to fortify their political strongholds. The position was the more easily defensible by them, because they were able at any time to strengthen their convictions by the sight of their monarch, George I., audibly humming with his lips, visibly wagging his head, and both audibly and visibly beating time in public to the music of his favourite foreign composer. A consideration of this sort—backed up perhaps by the knowledge that their Graces of Chandos and Devonshire might at any time be found doing in private what only his august Majesty dared to do in public—worked then, as now, like magic. In a word, the aristocracy picked up the exotic, Italian Opera, put it in their hothouses, and watered its roots with gold, knowing all the time that it had no better chance of flourishing in the ground outside than a pepper-tree has in Nova Zembla.

So far, so bad. But outside the aristocratic patrons of Italian Opera there was a much larger theatre-going public, a public which, not being able to pay the (foreign) piper, of course could not call the tune. Still a tune the public wanted, and more particularly an English tune. Unfortunately, the members of this public were only united by this desire and by their common ignorance of the steps necessary to attain their object. On this latter point they were divided into two parties who, in their efforts to found a school of National Opera adopted distinct and opposing methods.

To us, at the distance of two centuries, the course which these parties should have taken seems clear. They had an artistic heritage bequeathed them by Purcell, and they should have used this as a basis for development, just as Beethoven used Mozart, and Wagner used Weber. This continuity, however, was the last thing possible in face of the national circumstances. From our distant standpoint the great opportunity of the situation looms large, while its many difficulties tend, perhaps, to fade out of sight. We must, however, try to get a nearer view of the circumstances, and that is the easier for us to do because the two types of opposition to foreign Opera have exactly the same persistence at the present day as the aristocratic cult of that art-form.

II.

The first of the two methods by which Italian Opera was opposed in England was based, not on any genuine musical considerations, but on a sort of ineffectual patriotism. It was a timid and foolish movement to steal the intellectual results of a century's development (in Italy) and to apply those results without thought of the widely differing circumstances in England. The movement was timid because its authors had not the courage to face these differences honestly: it was foolish, because with two other parties in the field, one of which was openly patronizing, and the other as openly defying, the Italian methods—they could not hope to succeed by means of a half-way policy. Their way was ingenious and not much above that of the lucky tramp who finds a new coat by the road-side, puts it on, and wonders at the poor figure he cuts in it. It was in fact nothing less than to adopt the Italian

methods wholesale ; to trick up English drama with recitative *à l'Italienne* : and to pass off the whole ridiculous masquerade on their fellow-countrymen as "English Opera." In short, having stumbled across Opera by the wayside they appropriated it without asking questions. Nay, more, they expected that no questions would be asked. In this, as we shall see, they were disappointed, for the national conscience of their time was peculiarly tender on theft, and their special "pickpocket" form of art carried with it, had they but known it, a capital sentence.

The record of the movement to build up "English Opera" either on these lines or on the basis of translations from the original Italian is to be found scattered up and down the eighteenth century newspapers, pamphlets, and dedicatory epistles. On their futile protests we need not waste a single regret, nor need we be surprised to find that the patriotism behind which the movement sheltered itself was no more than a dummy-patriotism with the stuffing knocked out. Many of the arguments adduced in its favour are of the kind with which the public has been made quite familiar in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries —that is to say, they are quite sincere statements of the opinion that it would be nice if Opera flourished here as it does in Italy. A second resemblance to our own times is that, in both cases, the causes of difference between the English and the Continental publics are quietly ignored, and the underlying fallacy of the whole position is that, if only the English can be made to accept the foreign standpoint and the foreign methods, they can (by taking the mere mechanical precaution of writing in England and in English) produce a satisfactory School of English Opera.

The following quotation illustrates one of these eighteenth century attempts to found a National School of Opera. It is taken from "Ernelinda," an opera which was produced at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1716. The work is dedicated in a preliminary epistle to Richard, Viscount Lonsdale, Baron Lowther of Lowther, and his protection is desired "at a time when we labour under so many unhappy circumstances." The author then expresses the hope that there may be

> "many who will concur with your Lordship's sentiments, and think themselves concern'd to promote so noble a diversion which most foreign States think it their interest to support. By these means we may retrieve the reputation of our affairs and in a short time rival the stage of Italy."[1]

A similar design is discussed in the preface to "Camilla"[2] (1717). This opera contains a dedication to Lady Wharton and an address to the "Nobility and Gentry," in which proposals are made for the transplantation of Italian Opera to England. A great feature is made of the necessity of replacing Italian singers by English, and in this the author

[1] This reference to an attempt made to establish English Opera is subscribed by John James Heidegger, who was afterwards Handel's partner. I am unable to trace the authorship of the opera. It is not mentioned by Dassori, and the entry in Riemann's *Opern Handbuch* is a mere translation from an eighteenth century play-house guide. If the date, 1716, is correct it cannot of course be the "Ernelinda" of Leonardo Vinci (produced at Florence, 1726) or the "Ernelinda" of Galuppi (produced at Venice, 1752); still less that of Philidor (produced at Paris, 1767). The excerpt given above is not from the original, but from the MSS. transcription in the Haslewood collection (vol. ii. p. 174), British Museum. (See Bibliography at end.)

[2] By Marc Antonio Bononcini, brother of Handel's rival.

anticipates some of Mr. Beecham's utterances[1] by about two centuries. The whole scheme is summed up, somewhat guilelessly, as depending for its success on three conditions,—

"(1) The general encouragement from the town to what has been proposed;

"(2) The Reasonableness of the Performers in their demands;

"(3) The good Oeconomy and sincere Design of Pleasing in those who have undertaken it."

Projects of this sort, mixed up with poetical lamentations[2] on the public preference for Italian vocalists, are common all through the century, and even Sir Charles Stanford's recent suggestion that Opera should be united with spoken drama in a national institution is forestalled by an exactly similar plan outlined in the *Public Advertiser* of March 16th, 1790.[3] At most of the English Operatic productions of this age there was a calling together of the clans by means of a carefully-worded "puff preliminary." Such an advertisement as the following is constantly met with,—

"The highest expectations are formed from so capital a piece,[4] especially as it is wrote by that Person who first attempted to introduce English Operas upon our Theatres."

But we find continual evidence, then as now, that the promoters of these enterprises were keenly aware of their peril as between the devil of Fashionable Opera

[1] See interview in the *Observer*, March 20th, 1910.

[2] *E.g.* in the *Universal Journal*, July 11th, 1724.

[3] Where the writer, after pointing out the exotic and unthriving nature of Opera in this country, suggests that we should take example from Vienna.

[4] "Almena," by Rolt, Arne, and Battishall.

and the deep sea of Popular Musical Entertainment. A writer, discussing the question of a National Theatre in the *Public Advertiser* of April 14th, 1790, contrasts the great financial loss of Italian Opera with the success of such pieces as "The Beggar's Opera," "Love in a Village," and "The Haunted Tower." He continues:

> "The primary object should be the establishment of a National Theatre, under the best regulations, and the first patronage, as it is in France."[1]

Naturally no success was to be expected from an artistic rivalry in which a clumsy pupil was challenging a master at his own weapons. Indeed, the nearer he came to success the more remote became his chances of popular appreciation. He was thus bound to fall between two stools, and it would almost seem necessary to institute an enquiry "de lunatico" into the mental state of these Anglo-Continental composers. They took themselves very seriously, no doubt, allowing their audiences an intolerable deal of music to a miserable ha'penny worth of words, and scribbling down their musical prescriptions and commentaries here, there, and everywhere.[2] Their earnest desire seems to have been the foundation of a National Operatic School which would be recognized as satisfactory by their

[1] The wording of this appeal is in tone strangely and deliciously like a much later appeal for a National Opera House. The author of "Singing" (in Grove's *Dictionary*, 1st ed. vol. iii. p. 513) suggests the foundation of such a theatre to be conducted "upon the strictest rules of order, propriety, and morality" as an annexe to the Royal College of Music!

[2] See Arne's comments on his "Caractacus," and especially on his curious succession of trills (for the bassoon!), written to represent "the act of dying of a man."

fellow-countrymen. The one step, however, which would have carried them in this direction—the deference to their countrymen's wishes and prejudices—they refused to take. They were, so to speak, constantly torn between a strong desire to swim and an equally strong dislike of cold water.

So began the long line of operas for whose failure all the old familiar excuses have been, and still are, solemnly trotted out. The injustice and ignorance of the critics: the squabbles of the singers: the badness of the Opera books: the wickedness of the lower classes, who were too stupid to know anything (except perhaps what they did not want): the equal wickedness of the upper classes, who were so clever that they knew exactly what they did want: and the combination of these two types of wickedness, which threw its victims into a dreadful state of coma with respect to Anglo-Continental Opera; all these and a dozen similar excuses have been paraded in English journals and in English literature from the first years of the eighteenth century till the year of grace, 1911; and the operas on whose behalf they have been coaxed out to make their awkward, unconvincing, little bows before the public have all been Brummagen stuff, made in imitation of to-day in Italy, or of last-week in France, or of yesterday-fortnight in Germany. Can anything good, worthy, or noble come of such ideals? At any rate nothing ever has.

III.

The second of the two methods by which Italian Opera was opposed in England—namely, by the creation of "Ballad-Opera"—is more interesting to us, because we are able to perceive in it an expression of the real differences which existed then, as they

exist now, in the consciousness of the two peoples. This is the more important, because the nearer we approach our own days of democratic emancipation the more forcibly are we taught the lesson that any art which is not open to the people and understood by them is, by its nature, based upon some more restricted and less permanent characteristics of emotion and intellect, and that when these sands, so to speak, shift with the flight of years the next generation is unable to find a firm foundation for its own building. A new foundation has then to be laid, and the whole work begun again. It is just this monkey-like disconnectedness of effort which is one of the most permanent and distressing features in the history of English secular music.[1] The

[1] Dr. Walker touches on the reverse side of this argument in his *History of Music in England.* In speaking of our early eighteenth century composers, he says (p. 214): "We cannot help noticing, all through this period, a great extension of the artistic evils, the beginning of which we have already seen in Purcell's day. Composers were all too rapidly adopting the idea that they were the servants of a public that had to be pleased on the spot." We must, however, remember that the appearance and persistence of this idea in the minds of English composers calls, not merely for regret, but for explanation. And the explanation is to be found in their (possibly unconscious) recognition of the fact that the emotional developments of art can never be based, or at any rate have never been based, on alien intellectual achievements. To this truth our musical history bears painful witness. The writing of works calculated to please only those few persons who have substituted a knowledge of these achievements for personal experience of their own is evidence, not of artistic development, but of artistic impotence and selfishness. It seems to me nothing less than monstrous to represent those composers who descend, as it were, into the market-place, as descending there only for evil purposes. Many have gone there, and many more will go, in the knowledge that the people will not be called to from the hills and in the unselfish desire to make some personal sacrifice if, by doing so, they can lead their fellow-countrymen even a little

composer of every age is compelled to draw his vitality from the largest section of mankind accessible to him, and to look primarily to that section for his justification. Now, the largest section of mankind accessible to him *as things are at present* is not the inhabitants of Europe, far less those of the world, but those of his own nation; and, if musical history teaches any one lesson more clearly than another, it is that no great composer has ever emerged into world-speech except through the perfect utterance of his own dialect.[1]

way towards the heights. Even Plato, in his most hard-shell antagonism to the artistic and political efficiency of "the many," only makes the much qualified statement that a man cannot, *except in so far as is necessary*, *πέρα τῶν ἀναγκαίων*, make the people his arbiters of taste unless at the same time he faces the necessity of doing what they approve. But, after all, his "big, strong brute"—the public—is teachable, and it is only on that assumption that art progresses.

[1] It would be more correct to say "cultivated European speech," for, after all, it is only a small proportion of the inhabitants of the earth who either understand or tolerate our musical system. The analogy with speech is, of course, not quite accurate. To make it so we should have to imagine all European speech to consist of a number of words common to all nations, but used by them with differences of arrangement connoting differences of meaning and (incidentally) expressing differences of racial type. We are far too prone in this country to allow our musical subservience to Germany to distort our general artistic judgment on this question. Sir Hubert Parry's much-discussed statement (in his *Art of Music*, p. 292), that "Composers of different nations impart the flavours of Slav, English, Norwegian, and French to their songs, but make them, if they have any sense, on the same general terms as the great Germans," is, I think, not correct as history. And we can see this by noting how invariably this artistic canon has been rejected by men of first-class ability, and by comparing the devitalized product of such men as Anton Rubinstein, Gade, and Sterndale Bennett, or Hugo Pierson, with the vitalized utterance of such purely national composers as Tschaikowsky, Grieg, and Purcell. Again, as advice, the state-

The first appearance, then, of Italian Opera in England gave the signal to the English public, not for surrender, but for defiance ; and this defiance, though it was unsupported by any artistic strength or continuity of purpose, has persisted to the present day. It must not be imagined that the English of the early eighteenth century were a set of artistic barbarians on whom the use of music in the theatre came as a wonder-striking innovation. On the contrary, they had for long delighted in its employment, and their delight had resulted in the composition of more than one masterpiece. In the Italian Opera, however, which was now presented to them, they were suddenly faced by a new art-form which had been invented more than one hundred years earlier, and developed during that time to express ideals and aspirations in which they had no part. The game had, as it were, been played for a century, and its rules elaborated to suit a strange climate and a strange temperament, and consequently, when it was shipped over to be played on English turf and under English skies, the public viewed it with indifference or even exasperation. The same attitude of mind might be expected if a little aristocratic coterie of Italian sportsmen were to attempt the sudden introduction of cricket into Italy. It is not that the Italians do not know what a ball and

ment seems to me to confuse the question as to which nation has travelled farthest along one of the many parallel paths that lead to the temple of artistic perfection with the very different question as to the best track by which another nation, setting out from another starting-place, should attempt to reach and enter its wide gates. Perhaps the best answer to this latter question can be given in Sir Hubert Parry's own words (*Studies of Great Composers*, p. 224): "A genuine song requires a well-developed national style, and a treatment of melody which is perfectly adapted to the language."

even a bat are, but that their ways are quite different. Now, we have ample literary and musical evidence of the difference between the ways of the operatic Englishman and the operatic Italian from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the present day, and as these differences seem to have changed scarcely at all in that time it is interesting to look into them a little more closely.

As I understand it, there were two principal points on which the Englishman refused to accept the Italian's experience as authoritative. These were the points of "Subject" and "Method," in each of which he saw what I may call an "incongruity" which aroused his antagonism. The first of these "operatic incongruities" is not of any great philosophical interest, but is worth consideration, because it has had a constant bearing on the failure or success of individual operas in this country. I must, however, before describing these "operatic incongruities," point out that I am not discussing their philosophy as a detached artistic question, but merely trying to explain the spirit in which this artistic question was received by the English people. It is the more necessary to say this because it is too often assumed that the English have no view at all in the matter—are really little more than brute-beasts in their artistic judgments, and this lying assumption is based on a consideration of their indifference to art of which they do not approve, a consideration which should rightly lead to a precisely opposite deduction.

(*a*) Incongruity of Subject.[1]

As I have already mentioned, the invention of Opera was a *conscious* attempt to reconstitute the ancient

[1] I do not, of course, refer to the difficulty in justifying Opera

Greek drama. Its subjects were, therefore, exclusively drawn from antiquity. At first the mythology, especially the later neo-classical mythology of Greece and Rome, was used to provide subjects for musical illustration. Later still, the hackneyed topics of (antique) history were commandeered for stage use. The first type of opera is to be seen in the long list of seventeenth century works which sprang from their prototypes "Dafne" and "Euridice," and if we ask for examples of both these types, we have only to turn over, at random, any file of eighteenth century English newspapers and read the advertisements of forthcoming operas, such as "Admetus," "Porus," "Julius Caesar," "Aetius," "Coriolanus," "Sosarmes."[1]

Now, it is difficult enough to rouse the interest of the average theatre-goer in *any* historical or mythological subject; but, to the Italian, there is even now a trickle of blood in the veins by means of which he can claim kinship with some at any rate of these worthies. To a Londoner they have exactly the same interest as the doings of Thomas the Rhymer or King Alfred have to an Italian—nil. The important point for us is the existence of this indifference, not our opinion as to its rightness or wrongness. To a generation of such Londoners, accustomed to associate Opera with the lengthy boredoms of "Demetrius," "Pyrrhus," and "Hydaspes," the appearance of Captain Macheath and his friends in "The Beggar's Opera" seemed almost too good

itself as an art-form—a difficulty which seems to beset even the professional writers on Opera, and which rests on a misconception, which is equally applicable to all stage-plays, and indeed to all forms of art (see Fuller-Maitland in his preface to Streatfield's *The Opera*, p. ix.).

[1] From advertisements of 1732.

to be true. It was not that they considered thieving and beggary ideal subjects for Opera, but that they recognized, under this flimsy disguise, a satire on people and things with which they were acquainted.

In an opera of this sort their sense of humour was no longer outraged at every turn, nor were they called on to make continual mental concessions in accepting sham-heroics in place of tragedy. In a word, they were (for the first time) allowed to participate in the opera as well as to hear its music. For this reason alone, if for no other, the new "Ballad Opera," however awkward and primitive its form, was bound to succeed.

Before passing on to deal with the second "incongruity," that of "Method," I must point out that the constant choice of heroic antiquity as the subject for Italian Opera necessitated a corresponding heaviness of treatment, which was then, as now, quite opposed to English ideas. The English temperament allows the acceptance of tragedy which is real tragedy and not mere heroics, but it also demands the relief either of fancy or humour. Now, some of the subjects with which Italian Opera dealt were, it is true, capable of fanciful, poetical treatment, but these were subjects whose genuine appeal was to the Greek mind, or to the Latin mind as it had been influenced by the Greek. To the Anglo-Saxon mind these subjects meant little or nothing, and they were in a minority. The greater number of these topics were capable of receiving only heroic or profoundly gloomy treatment, and, as a matter of fact, the words "heroics and gloom" fairly well describe the eighteenth century Italian Opera.

The object of music, however, is the heightening

of emotion, and we must, therefore, not overlook the fact that if we reject the most emotional topics we are, so to speak, taking the sword out of the Muse's hand. This the eighteenth century Englishman did consciously, but we may plead in extenuation that the only emotional topics which were presented for his approval were topics which he could not approve. He chose, therefore, what was to him the lesser of two evils, the maintenance of a type of Opera thin and scrappy, no doubt, but free from what he regarded as fundamental absurdities. He remembered, perhaps, that neither tragedy, fancy, nor poetry is the perquisite of classical history and mythology, and, if his national circumstances had permitted it, he might have developed all these elements—as the Continental nations have developed them—in an Opera based on his own familiar history and on those intimate topics which were most congenial to his national temperament.

I may touch on the fact—in parenthesis—that this dislike of an English audience for theatrical gloom is still a factor which we must take into account. We have only to drop into Covent Garden about half-past eleven any evening during the grand season to witness some two or three healthy-looking aliens dying slowly (sometimes *very* slowly) by cold steel, hot lead, poison, asphyxiation, phthisis, burial-alive, or, in default of all these, by that curious form of disease—the "morbus operaticus"—which attacks and instantly kills tenors and sopranos just before the last act curtain.[1] If we drop in a little earlier in the evening to ascertain the causes which lead up to these melancholy occurrences we shall find them ranging, in a variety of

[1] "An opera must end happily," says The Player in "The Beggar's Opera."

circumstances downwards, from seduction and bigamy to adultery and incest.[1]

Now, it is true that these things exist just as forgery, petty larceny, and burglary exist. A man does not, however, applaud or deplore a murder the more—or, for that matter, determine the more to commit murder or to refrain from doing so—because he has read of it in his newspaper or seen "Othello."[2] The fact is merely brought before his consciousness that, in certain circumstances, murder has been committed. As far as the theatre-goer is concerned there is no moral question at all.[3] Nor is it possible to deny sureness of judgment to a people who have produced Shakespeare. But, on this point, both they and Shakespeare are quite clear, for while they admit "pity and fear," they refuse "disgust and loathing" as cleansers of the soul. And more than that, they claim that the gloomy and sordid aspects of life shall not be forced into an (artistically false) prominence at the expense of the other brighter aspects which are more poetical and no less permanent.

[1] Sullivan, in his address "About Music," delivered at Birmingham in 1888, made the curiously incomplete and inaccurate statement that "Music ... is absolutely free from the power of suggesting anything immoral.... It can convey every meaning except one—an impure one." There are, of course, many meanings other than impure meanings that music cannot convey, and the only reason why it cannot "suggest anything immoral" is because it is an art and therefore non-moral. Music cannot suggest the time of day, or the degrees of longitude and latitude, and if its function was to do either of these things or to inculcate the practice of virtue it would cease to be an art.

[2] On this point, in connection with "The Beggar's Opera," see Johnson's and Gibbon's remarks in Boswell's *Life*, under date 1775.

[3] See Mr. Lawrence Gilman's criticism of Mr. Ernest Newman in *Aspects of Modern Opera*, p. 95.

This trend of thought, which is sometimes wrongly called "idealistic," has always been a characteristic of the English outlook, and no good purpose is to be served by pretending that it does not exist. We must, therefore, face fully and squarely the fact that it involves some sacrifice on the part of music. It is, however, only a sacrifice which will have to be made at the beginning of an operatic culture, for the English public is always eager to brush away the antiquarian obstacles that are too frequently strewn in its path, and to welcome free-heartedly the emotional mission of operatic music: only one cannot think that it is ever likely to tolerate the unrelieved gloom which has been passed off on it more than once as "English Opera." Tragedy that ennobles and purifies—Yes: Comedy that brightens and charms —Yes: even Tragedy and Comedy mixed: but mud masquerading as flesh and blood—No, no, no.

(*b*) Incongruity of Method.

The second, and much more important, point in which the English found cause for dissatisfaction with the Italian Opera I have named roughly "Incongruity of Method." In a word, it was the presence of "declamatory recitative," that is to say, of successions of notes written, as was the fashion then, not to enhance the emotional strength of the words, but merely to prevent the singer dropping awkwardly into actual speech. The original idea of the early seventeenth century Italians had been to provide an Opera in which the music emphasized the emotional contents of the drama while remaining subsidiary to the drama itself, and the efforts of all reformers have really been directed towards this one

goal. Gluck sums up this philosophy in a simple and straightforward manner. He says :[1]

> "When I undertook to set the opera of *Alceste* to music, I resolved to avoid all those abuses which had crept into Italian Opera through the mistaken vanity of singers and the unwise compliance of composers, and which had rendered it wearisome and ridiculous instead of being, as it once was, the grandest and most important stage of modern times. I endeavoured to reduce music to its proper function, that of seconding poetry by enforcing the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situations without interrupting the action or weakening it by superfluous ornament."

Again, Purcell's phrase, "Musick is the exaltation of poetry,"[2] is only a more general expression of the same idea. Wagner's insistence that the true end of "Opera"—that is to say the *drama* itself—had been obscured by its means of expression—*music*—is well known to all : while, in our own day, M. Debussy has restated the creed almost in Gluck's words. Writing of his opera "Pelleas and Melisande" he says :

> "I wished—intended, in fact,—that the action should never be arrested : that it should be continuous, uninterrupted. I wanted to dispense with parasitic musical phrases."

[1] In his preface to "Alceste."

[2] In the dedication of "Dioclesian." He adds—"Both of them may excell apart, but surely they are most excellent when they are joyn'd, because nothing is then wanting to either of their proportions ; for thus they appear like wit and beauty in the same person."

This was essentially the aim of the inventors of Opera; but, before the beginning of the eighteenth century endless abuses had crept into the form. Mr. Ernest Newman, in one of his penetrating criticisms,[1] has pointed out the dangers which Europe ran at the time of the Renaissance—a movement which was based, like Opera, on a passionate study of Greek antiquity. The danger was lest this new cult, coming as it did on an aesthetically weakened civilization, should, by its virility, keep back the growth of the very spirit which it had called into existence.

With Opera the peril was all the greater, because it was a *conscious* attempt to reproduce the Greek drama. It was, then, in danger of being driven into a position of seclusion where it could only exist as an antiquarian curiosity. From this it was saved partly by the reformers and partly by the singers.[2] In the course of this salvation, however, the functions of the music had become split up into two distinct parts, and the music itself was written in two totally different styles—those in which the composer wished to amplify the emotional moments of the play, and those in which he wished to explain and justify these moments. Unfortunately, the influence of the singers was directed, not only towards glorifying the central "situations" of the play, but more particularly towards the personal glorification of himself, herself, and (at that time) itself. The result was a deformed species of Opera in which the characters were always

[1] In *Gluck and the Opera*, part ii. chapter i.

[2] For the influence of the singers on eighteenth century Opera, see Mr. A. J. Balfour's essay on "Handel" (No. 3 in his *Essays and Addresses*).

singing arias of a fixed conventional pattern,[1] or else discussing their own and each other's woes in a strange chatter which had neither the interest of speech nor of song.

It was against this chatter that the early eighteenth century Englishman rebelled.

He was willing enough to accept the Purcellian definition of music as "the exaltation of poetry," but when the singers stopped exalting poetry and began a maddening "recitative" which was as unlike music as the sound of a jerky sewing-machine, his patience gave out. Recalling the masques in which he had delighted fifty or sixty years before, he invented for himself "Ballad Opera," a flimsy, artless thing made up of any scraps of folk-tune and of old and modern songs on which he could lay hands. Into such an opera he would pitchfork any musical "number" which he thought would "go," and he shared with the modern musical-comedy manager the art of "cutting" his numbers down to the fewest bars possible.

On one principle alone he was inflexible, and *consciously* inflexible, and that principle was "no recitative." Here he openly defied the Italians, and indeed throughout the whole of the eighteenth century we find the words "the Italian style" and "the Italian manner" used regularly for "recitative." The introduction to the first and best of all Ballad Operas states the author's intention in a sentence. He says:

> "I have not made my Opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue; for I have no recitative."[2]

[1] *E.g.* The "Aria cantabile," the "Aria di portamento," the "Aria di mezzo carattere," the "Aria parlante," the "Aria di bravura" (Grove).

[2] "The Beggar's Opera," 1727.

For the rest, his method was to ignore the whole problem of operatic construction and to break off into spoken dialogue at the end of each song; and this has remained the cowardly English method, or rather want of method, for more than 150 years. The inclusion of concerted pieces and of a few odd tags of recitative here and there has given it a certain appearance of development, but, in its diffidence to face and solve (in its own way) the essential difficulties of the problem, practically every successful English work has been true to the timid type of "The Beggar's Opera." I need scarcely mention that all these "Ballad Operas" were written and performed in English, and this fact alone, if there were no other, would be sufficient to prove the inaccuracy of the often-repeated statement[1] that English, in the eighteenth century, was not looked upon as a suitable medium for music. This was, no doubt, the view of the dense-headed aristocratic classes, who preferred (as they still prefer) mental fog in Italian to sunshine in English; but the people—artistically undeveloped as they were and are—have always shown a very lively recognition of the fact that it is necessary to understand before one can enjoy.

We must pause here to reflect that the composers, or rather the compilers, of these Ballad Operas could not look for support to an artistically united nation. One portion of that nation—the aristocracy—was amusing itself with Italian Opera much as it might

[1] *E.g.* "It was strangely believed that no other language" (*i.e.* than Italian) "was admissible for artistic opera" (Walker, *History of Music in England*). "There was so much said against the unfortunate English language as a medium of vocal expression that native talent had little or no chance of distinguishing itself" (Markham Lee, *The Story of Opera*).

amuse itself with the lions at the Tower: another portion—the professional musicians and their followers—was attempting, almost without thought, a mechanical and unsuccessful imitation of foreign Opera. Thus the money and the brains which should have been employed in the development of English Opera were both wasted. The position of affairs has not greatly changed to-day. At the top of the tree we have our Grand Opera Season devoted to the pursuit of fashion and the foreigner, while at the bottom we have an enormous expenditure of wealth and energy on Comic Opera and Musical Comedy—a relatively low form of art. In between these come the haphazard operatic ventures of our "serious" composers—ventures based, as a rule, not on any genuine desire to offer the nation a sympathetic expression of its own ideas, but on a somewhat too close familiarity with the prejudices of Paris, Bayreuth, and Milan.

The reader may very well ask what hope there can be of English Opera under such adverse conditions. On that question I shall have something to say in a future chapter, but meanwhile I may perhaps point out that, as far as one can judge, the last-named type of operatic energy—the Anglo-Continental—seems to be useless as a foundation for building, because it is itself based on a self-destructive mental perversity. The men, however, who have been writing these dull and dignified operas possess just the brains and culture which are necessary in the work of raising the popular taste; and this is just the work which they should be doing from artistic, patriotic, and personal motives. Indeed, it is difficult to see what other line of fruitful activity is open to them. They

cannot hope to place themselves at the head of the foreign culture in London, when the foreigner himself is here in hundreds: they might, however, captain a great national artistic movement. To that course, it seems to me, their artistic honour compels them. It is a course that requires some sacrifice and much sympathy, but it is also a course of infinite hopefulness. Yet they appear to be incapable of either the needful sympathy or the sacrifice. One might almost say that they have not yet passed out of their "eighteenth century" of mental aloofness. The more's the pity. They are all as polished as Pope and as gentlemanly as George IV.; and they are quite content to sit up aloft in their prettily terraced Palace of Art (built by alien labour) and discuss the maxims of Confucius with an easy mandarinesque elegance, while all the time they should be down in the garden, coats off and spade in hand.

To sum up then, we have in our operatic history the spectacle of a large mass of (comparatively) poor people producing certain relatively low art-forms satisfactory to themselves, and a small number of rich people supporting certain foreign art-forms equally satisfactory to themselves. Each in turn is able to exert, and does exert, a negative and stultifying influence on the other: and this facing-both-ways position of the nation is reflected in the mental attitude of the class between—the composers —some of whom have always been engaged in developing popular music, while the rest have been producing works, as it were, *in vacuo*—works that were above and unrelated to the popular standards, but below the aristocratic standards, and only related to them in the way that to-day in England is related

to yesterday in Germany. From this latter type of music I can gather no hope. We have, unfortunately, always had the imitator with us, and he has produced for us endless imitations of Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Wagner, and Tschaikowsky. Now he is beginning to turn his attention to Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy; but, however clever his imitations may be—and they are often diabolically clever—there is in them all a seed of death.[1] It is dishonest music; or worse, it is traitorous.

But in the former type of music I can see some hope, though its realization may be far off. We must remember that, though its development has been small, the limit has been set by the limit of our national artistic unity. The producers of this music have had to say to themselves: "Thus far, and no further," not because the possibilities of new artistic development were exhausted, but because they found themselves faced by insuperable social, and therefore commercial, obstacles. Every lover of English Opera should, therefore, fix firmly in his mind the hope that the pernicious cult of the foreigner, which makes London the (very profitable) laughing-stock of Europe, should be ended. On some of the difficulties connected with this I shall touch in a later chapter. Meanwhile I may point out that, however small the development of popular English Opera has been, there is a development; and that can be seen by reading through the scores of, say, "The Beggar's Opera," "Rosina,"[2] "The Knight of

[1] In the year 1911 one hears a perfectly sane musician speaking of a young English composer with admiration on the ground that he has learnt by heart a certain beautiful but extremely alien French opera, *and believes in every note of it!*

[2] Shield.

Snowdoun,"[1] "The Night Dancers,"[2] "The Mountain Sylph,"[3] and "The Mikado"[4] or "Shamus O'Brien."[5]

To develop it still further our composers must, once for all, put off their high-and-dry, detached attitude of mind and determine, at whatever sacrifice to themselves, to write Opera which is "accessible and intelligible" to the people. I do not say that it would ever be possible or desirable for a composer who is merely a "foreign music expert" to make this attempt; but there are many men who are at once sufficiently "in compact with their times,"[6] and sufficiently alert to the possibilities of improvement. It is to these men, and not to the antiquaries, that one must look for that earnest and sympathetic recognition of present-day actualities without which no forward step can be taken. When this has been done, the unfortunate gap which divides the two sides of the profession may be bridged, and we shall get rid of that taint which has too often of late years associated artistic worth with social respectability. I need say no more on this topic.

The question may, however, be asked whether the very strong anti-operatic prejudices of the Englishman can ever be overcome. In answer to that I would call the reader's attention to the fact that the prejudices of the Englishman are not prejudices against *Opera* as a form, but against what he considers *the incongruities of Opera* as elaborated abroad. It is true that he alternately laughs and sulks when (in his own language) he hears stage people discussing their food[7] and their psychology

[1] Bishop. [2] Loder. [3] Barnett. [4] Sullivan. [5] Stanford.

[6] Mr. Vernon Blackburn's criticism of Puccini.

[7] So much has been said, in this country, about Pinkerton's

in song. But this is a sign of grace—not of disgrace. Opera should be simple and austere in its outlines. The function of its music should be, as Gluck said, "to second Poetry," and it is just this function of which the English most heartily approve.

But, the reader may say, surely this will result in a type of Opera quite different from anything which has present existence? Indeed it will: and, if it did not result in such a type, it would not be either artistic or healthy. But—again the reader may urge—surely Opera is by its nature dual? it needs both the emotional situations and the intellectual explanations of these situations. This also is quite true; but the English people do not like these

unfortunate "Milk-punch or Whisky?" that one may perhaps cite it as a *locus classicus* of operatic absurdity *to an Englishman*. It must be remembered, however, that, if we put aside the names of the characters, these are the only words in the opera which an Englishman understands at Covent Garden. The annoyed titter that generally goes round the house when the tuneful bigamist suggests a drink, seems to me to be caused in one of two ways. First, there is the oddness to the hearer of suddenly distinguishing two trivial words with which he is familiar. This is no more than the oddness which is felt if one is compelled to listen to a speech or a play in an unknown language. Occasionally a couple of syllables will occur which seem to sound like common English words—often grotesquely inappropriate to the speaker's action. In such a case a smile is bound to come, the more so because (as in listening to Opera in a foreign tongue) one is at the moment intellectually detached. As an example of this grotesqueness in Opera, I may perhaps be allowed to quote a remark made to me by a distinguished English Composer who is only moderately acquainted with the German language. He said that, in listening to *Fidelio*, he could never wholly rid his mind of the idea that the Chorus was making its exit, not on the German words "Leise! leise!", but on the English words "'Liza! 'Liza!" Next there is the sudden chagrin at sliding—or rather being slid—from a high emotional to a low intellectual plane. It is quite obvious that the mere

intellectual "connecting links," especially if they deal, as they often must deal, with external topics. They will, then, insist on an Opera free from these "connecting links"? Certainly: and that Opera will, therefore, be different in its nature from our present Opera. It will be an Opera such as Purcell imagined—an Opera in which the Drama is poetry, and the Music is employed to "exalt the poetry." The artistic difficulties in the way of elaborating such an Opera are, for an English composer, trifling. There are numbers of beautiful stories with which the public is familiar, and, even if the topic chosen is unfamiliar, the procession of the Drama itself can be—and indeed ought to be—restricted to such

calling for "wine" or "drink" on the stage cannot be matter either of humour or of offence. An English singer, singing in English before an English audience, might (with his hand on the bottle) say, "Give me a draught of Asti Spumante" without raising a smile, because the words "Asti Spumante" have no meaning to an English audience, which merely sees, by the actor's gestures, that he means "wine"; but the connotation of the word "whisky" is specialized to the Englishman, and that is why he regrets it as unsuitable to Opera. It is not, as Mr. Lawrence Gilman says, because Pinkerton is "a man of our own time." He is—or ought to be—*a man*, and that is enough; his "time" is of no consequence. But it is essential that he should say and do things applicable to any time. Men and women drink wine and wear garments at all times; they also love and desert each other. But if we specialize any of these things—as, for instance, by saying that he drank bottled beer, or wore Jaeger underclothing, or deserted her by taking the 2.20 from Charing Cross—we rob the character of its generality, and therefore detract from its emotional appeal. It follows that the less fundamental to human nature the action is with which the author is dealing, the greater the necessity of attaching that action as a "ceremonial movement" or "observance" to the drama as an integral part of its structure. Thus such simple movements as the opening of a door or the raising of a cup of wine to the lips become sanctified to their proper ends in Music-Drama.

broad developments as we see in "Tristan and Isolde," while the movements of the actual characters on the stage can be, and ought to be, confined to those expressive "ceremonial movements," each one of which has a definite bearing on the Drama. In an Opera of this sort we stretch hands, as it were, across two centuries to Henry Purcell. The "emotion of the character" and the "emotion of the music"[1] become blended into a single conception, in which the two parts are presented simultaneously to the audience. All the petty Operatic incongruities which have scandalized Englishmen for so long disappear at once, and leave us with an Opera that is musically flexible but dramatically simple.

[1] Debussy's phrase.

CHAPTER V

TO-DAY IN LONDON

In the first chapter of this book I drew attention to the fact that, though many operas have been written in England by and for Englishmen, we cannot be said to have any organic Operatic History. The history which we have is, when considered socially, the history of a continual struggle between a foreign culture imposed on us by our own upper classes and a national popular culture which was at once more elementary in its nature, less self-conscious, and (artistically) almost completely undeveloped.

In this struggle it is noteworthy that, though the foreign composer always won, the Englishman was beaten but never killed : he rose to his feet again and, with a certain doggedness of purpose, renewed the contest, fighting in his old way and with his old weapons. There was something laughable—almost pathetic—in this tenacity. Always defeated, he refused, with a curiously sure instinct, to get himself the rapier and light suit of foreign armour with which alone, it might have been supposed, he could fight successfully. Homespun and leather with a good English broadsword were, he knew, the only implements with which he could ultimately win ; but what amazes us is his stupidity in not seeing that the condition of his success was that his leather and

homespun should be made good and sound and his rusty blade resharpened. From the disjointed record of this disheartening combat we have to manufacture a history out of which, indeed, almost no fact emerges except that, through all his defeats, he kept before his eyes certain ideals towards the attainment of which he made scarcely one efficient step.

Now, of all artists, the Operatic composer is most dependent on a public. The writer of songs, and even of symphonies, the painter, and the sculptor may all develop themselves and their art supported only by the sympathy and encouragement of a few chosen spirits. They not only may do this, but they have done it and are doing it to-day. With the Operatic composer it is different. If he does not secure the sense of touch both of the "stage" and of the "house" he is working in a vacuum. The painter or the sculptor may find one or two intelligent and artistic patrons who are willing to buy his works and so enable him to develop: he has the exterior world before his eyes, and, when he has painted his picture or carved his statue, the work exists as he intends it to exist. In a somewhat different manner the writer of songs and symphonies has no serious barrier to surmount before he can get in touch with his public. The expenses attending song-publication and symphony-performance are comparatively small, and even if he finds them beyond any means which may be under his control, he can at a pinch—though I do not say it is a good thing to do—write, as Schubert wrote, for his shelf. But when the Operatic composer has written his work it has not, for him, the absolute existence of the painted picture or the carved statue. Nor can it be

performed, as the song and the symphony can, except at very great expense. Yet its composer stands more in need of this realization of his work than either the song-writer or the symphonist. In both the latter cases it is possible to judge fairly exactly how the work will "come out" in performance. I do not deny that a fine symphonic work may be stultified by a bad performance, but such performances are rare. The composer can, as a rule, count on a certain average size of concert hall, a capable conductor, and a known number of musicians who have been trained to consider obedience and precision as an eleventh commandment.

To the Operatic composer there are no such stereotyped conditions. His "house" may hold 500 people or 3000: his orchestra may vary from 45 to 100: it may be sunk so deep that all his quiet effects are thrown away: it may be raised so high as to make anything beyond the Mozart Orchestra unbearable to the audience: in addition to that he may have to contend with a dozen inartistic and mutually jealous persons on the stage: an electric button touched at the wrong moment in the prompt-box may ruin his most carefully planned scene: a yard of flapping carpet thrown down carelessly on to the stage may exasperate—and has exasperated—an audience so completely that attention to the tragedy becomes impossible: the British workman—a humorous and not highly artistic being—co-operates with him on the east and on the west, in the heavens above and in the deep places under his stage. Out of all these factors his opera has to emerge, and, however it emerges, the public (which has a baby-like inability to distinguish between a work and its presentation) will think that "that was

what the composer intended." Yet it is only by public performance that the composer can find out what are his own possibilities and limitations and what is the line of least resistance on the part of the audience.

But in England he has to face a much more serious difficulty,—*his operas may not be performed at all.* We must therefore dwell for a moment on the situation as it affects him, that is to say, on his chances of performance. Speaking generally, we may put it that these chances are microscopically small—so small, indeed, that it is almost matter of wonder why any sane man should waste his time in Operatic composition. There are, it is true, a number of houses in London which deal successfully with "Musical Comedy," but there is only one house—Covent Garden—which deals, even for a few weeks in the year, with the other side of the picture,—"Musical Tragedy," and from this house the Englishman is practically excluded. In addition to these two very different types which reproduce for us, in the twentieth century, the pleasant times when a Saxon composer was imported to write Italian Opera for an English audience, and when little children were hanged for stealing a loaf of bread, we have two other sorts of Operatic activity—the sporadic attempts of casual impresarios to run "English Opera" in London and the all-the-year-round activities of the travelling Opera companies. These latter organizations, which are mainly connected nowadays with the names of Carl Rosa and Moody-Manners, deal not so much with English Opera as with foreign Opera translated into English, though it is true that they have genuine English operas in their repertoire and have also done excellent work in

the production of new English operas. The chief interest of the work done by the travelling Opera companies and the light opera-houses in London lies, however, as far as we are concerned, in the state of receptivity or preparedness to which they have brought the public, and I shall therefore make further mention of their work when I come to discuss that question in a later chapter.

In the first place, then, we have the annually recurring Foreign Opera Season at Covent Garden on which the epithet "Grand" is usually bestowed; though it is difficult to surmise of what exactly its grandeur consists—whether we apply that term to the "Season" or to the "Opera." It is probable that no English composer could be found who would speak very lovingly of this institution, nor could we expect to find a patriotically minded layman extolling methods which have either failed to interpret or have run directly contrary to the wishes of all but a small and aristocratic section of the community. On the other hand, nothing could be more unfair than the sneers with which *its performances* are usually held up to execration as a sort of glorified dressmakers' parade or snobs' carnival. It is true that on this side of the proscenium arch there is generally a cosmopolitan display of that wealth and fashion which has now for over sixty years been welcomed within the walls of the "Royal Italian Opera"; but, if the management is responsible for the class of its patrons, it is no less responsible for the class of its performances, and of these performances, as they are at the present day, it is not possible to speak except in terms of sincere praise.

All the details of lighting and costuming are on the whole carefully thought out: the stage-sets

themselves are sometimes models of imaginative design and exquisite taste: the whole apparatus and mechanical technique of the stage have been modernized and perfected in order to permit the solution of the most difficult stage problems: the singers, the orchestra, and even the ensemble are, as a rule, beyond reproach; and, if the general level of stage management is sometimes a trifle below that to which we are accustomed in the best London theatres, we must remember, on the one hand, the difficulties of a constantly changing play-bill, and, on the other, the peculiar conditions of London, where the demands of an enormous population have created a supply of talent, energy, and artistic taste which makes its stage—in point of mere material—the first in the world.

All this agglomeration of stage-material can, however, be purchased with money in just the same way that a butcher can purchase a big plate-glass shop in the west-end. The question remains, how is he going to stock his shop? I need not say that the Covent Garden syndicate is, so to speak, in the foreign meat or cold-storage business, and we shall be disappointed if we expect to find any British beef in its windows. Like the fashionable tradesmen, however, it does a big turnover in the season, and here again, if we can shut our eyes to the (artistic) ethics of a policy which displays only foreign goods to its customers—the most energetically patriotic aristocracy in the world—we can only praise.

This praise we may reduce to a few words by saying that practically every *foreign* masterpiece has been heard at Covent Garden generally for the first time in England. There are, of course, a certain number of foreign works in whose local interest it

would be impossible to find an international "least-common-denominator" such as would, in ordinary circumstances, justify their production here. Some even of these operas have been tried at Covent Garden in the "Grand" season: others have been mounted—and have failed—elsewhere. This is Covent Garden's record, a record which, if not "great" is at any rate "grand," and not made the less so by the reiterated charge that the Royal Italian Opera is always half a generation or so behind the Continent. This is not now actually true, but even if it were, one would feel inclined to make one's compliments to the management on their instinctive, if incomplete, intuition as to the national character.

The reader may perhaps be tempted to ask why, if this theatre has so grand and glorious a record, do the masses of the people rarely or never enter its grand and glorious portals? Again, why is it that the professional musician's visits are so rare? Why does he go there at most once or twice in a year, and then prompted only by curiosity, or by the desire to maintain his professional position by hearing another foreign work? Why do his visits grow rarer and rarer as his years increase? And why does each successive visit make him feel more like a lost wanderer who has strayed from earth to another and less familiar planet? Why is it that the people whom one sees in the cheaper parts of the house *look* so different from those who are to be seen in the same parts of many other houses at the same time? Why is it that in those other houses one can see, as it were, a microcosm of the country, while here are only a crowd of untidy, anaemic girls whose heads are being stuffed with foreign music at our music

schools, a few clerks of the high-browed and spectacled variety, a singer or two still in a state of pupillage, and the rest—Soho?

Now, the answer to this question is that the Covent Garden "Grand" Season bears the same relationship to our national life and character as a nobleman's orchid-house bears to a cottager's flower-garden, or as the tiger-house at the Zoo bears to a Royal Agricultural Society's Show. Both the orchid-house and the tiger-house—like the Royal Italian Opera—are interesting and expensive curiosities. To the Javanese or to the Indian they are neither exotic nor abnormal: to the Englishman they are both. He knows that neither his hedgerows nor his ploughed fields can ever benefit by the rearing of equatorial orchids in hot-houses: he also knows that no breed of animals under his northern skies is ever likely to be improved by the most careful and constant watching of caged tigers. He therefore wisely ordains that his board of agriculture shall not expend its energies (and his money) on experimental orchid farms or on menageries.

But this is exactly what Covent Garden does for us.

The charge against it is not that its record is not grand and glorious, but that it has achieved a record in which we have no part and from which we can draw as a nation neither present benefit nor hope for the future. Its grandeur and its glory are to us as the grandeur and glory of one foreign country which defeats another. The dusty laurels may be brought here for exhibition, but they do not move us either to joy or to sorrow because neither the suffering nor the elation of the combat was ours. The accusation of the Englishman against Covent Garden under its

present conditions is not that it has not done good work, but that it has not done *his* good work. Its sympathies and its feeling are not for the nation, but for the smallest and least productive section of the nation and for the foreigner. Its password is fashion; its hall-mark, alienage; its sign-manual, the diamond tiara. Of the native composer who wishes to free his art from its scented atmosphere, its big, flashy foreign women, and its babel of every-tongue-in-the-world-but-his-mother-English, it knows nothing and cares nothing. If he wants to appeal to his fellow-countrymen he is at liberty to do so—outside in the street.

"But," a friend of the Covent Garden management may say, "why should the English composer grumble? Have not A and B and C had their works produced there?"

"Indeed they have—A and B and C, but scarcely even D."

"Granted! And their success—?"

"was nil. I allow it."

"And these were the best works you Englishmen could produce?"

"On the contrary, they were the best works we could produce when working to your foreign patterns."

And so the ludicrous interchange goes on,—the foreign opera-house opening its doors to the semi-foreign Englishman, and growling at his failures; the Englishman, whose sole daily delight it is to exalt the horn of the fatherland before his students, growling in his turn because they have learnt their lesson too well and will not accept his Anglo-Continental milk-and-water in place of the "pure, rich, thick" cream made in Germany.

Well might those, who had the artistic welfare of their country most at heart, have lifted their hands in despair. And, indeed, they were on the point of despair when the announcement was made that the resources of a great commercial undertaking were, in part at least, to be put at the service of Operatic —it was at first thought of *English* Operatic—art. On the extreme interest of this announcement to all students of social science I shall not dwell. No more striking example of the responsibilities and opportunities of wealth could be found than this case where the productive labour of many was to be passed, like the sands in an hour-glass, through one man's hands for distribution.

Mr. Beecham brought to his task an engaging personality, unbounded enthusiasm for his art, and a complete detachment from all those cliques and coteries whose distressing antagonisms disfigure the musical life of the Metropolis. To these qualifications he added the energy of youth and the momentum of money. With patience and discrimination he managed, in face of some difficulties, to form an operatic orchestra not only as good as but better than any similar combination hitherto heard in London. For his singers he ransacked the world. Continental Europe, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia were all put under contribution; while, at home, he laid hands on the church, the concert-room, and even the musical-comedy stage.

Now, to the English composer, sitting at home in his arm-chair with a single eye on his one great objective—the elaboration of operas composed by Englishmen, sung by English artists, and listened to by English audiences—the problem of their production appears simple. To the impresario who has to

face and master the complex conditions, artistic, financial, and social, which govern the direction of an opera-house, the problem, even when it is freed from all financial anxieties, may well appear much less simple. It is interesting, then, to know the views of so enthusiastic and experienced an impresario as Mr. Beecham.

In the first place he considers the idea of a National Opera House "preposterous, futile and idiotic." He believes "absolutely in the individual, Opera should be international." These words, which I copy from an interview with him in the *Observer* of March 20th, 1910, show a distinct and strong intention. I understand them to mean that the actual direction and production of Opera is—unlike many other forms of literary, artistic, educational, and social activity—not a matter in which the State can meddle with advantage. We must, however, ask ourselves the question, "With advantage to whom?" Obviously it cannot mean "To Mr. Beecham," for his aims are understood to be of a disinterested and artistic nature, and therefore we must, in fairness, assume that he approaches the question without personal bias. It must, then, be either to the artists who take part in the performances, to the composers who originate them, or to the public which, in the long run, pays for them. These are the three parties interested in the question of State-aided Opera.

Now, it is quite obvious that, granted the existence of English Opera, whether under the guidance of the State or of an individual, it is matter of commercial indifference to the singer whether he sings under the one set of conditions or the other. There may be some few differences between the two,

such as a lowering of his fees accompanied by a corresponding pension when he is under State control; but on the whole he will be able to exercise his art as well and profitably in the one case as in the other.[1]

The English composer himself, who should be at least as much interested in this question as the singer or the impresario, seems to me curiously apathetic in his views on national Opera. The reason may perhaps be found in the fact that to him the possibility of an Operatic production at a central London theatre is surrounded by much the same dazzling haze as that which obscures the field-marshal's baton from the corporal's sight. It is undoubtedly there, but not worth considering. If his despondency allows him to take any view of the question at all he generally turns his eyes hopefully to some one or other of the suggested schemes of

[1] I may mention in parenthesis that whoever undertakes the future control of English Opera will, at the same time, have to undertake a reform of its singers. Recent performances have made it abundantly clear that our singers are, with few exceptions, very far from possessing a declamatory or articulatory method suited to the requirements of the opera-house. The difficulties in the way of building up an adequate school of English Operatic singing are not, I think, great, provided the fundamental principle is always kept in sight, that this can only be done by means of the production of original English operas. Mr. Beecham is understood to hold views that are sympathetic to our English singers, and it is only to be hoped that a too close familiarity with some of their methods will not lead him to abandon any plans which he may have for their encouragement. In the interview quoted above he says: "But where I differ very much from some of my predecessors is in the belief that the services of a very large number of English artists of as great ability as many on the Continent, and possessing, for the most part, superior voices, can be utilised . . . We have, as I have said, excellent singers, who, if they want to get on, have to go abroad to make a success."

State-aided Opera.[1] He feels that, at any rate during the past twenty years, the individual impresario and the groups of associated impresarios have been very loath to mount his works, and as he can draw from his personal experience little hope or belief for the future, he is inclined to welcome any change whatever. I cannot help thinking that the responsibility for this unsatisfactory state of affairs is divided. The composer, on his part, has not, as a rule, made any serious attempt to produce the class of work which English audiences want: and the Opera manager, on the other hand, has generally been guided by a striking want of sympathy with the composer, and a corresponding want of faith in the public. These discrepancies—all perhaps inevitable during a transition period such as the present, but none the less worthy of consideration—lend a more pointed interest to the situation now that Mr. Beecham has entered the Operatic field.

With the more general question of State-aided Opera I shall deal later, but I may point out that there seems to be a consensus of lay opinion that the genius of the English people lies, as a rule, in the direction of, and is best expressed by, the freedom of individual activity. The State and the municipalities have, indeed, under pressure of public sentiment, assumed a partial control in such matters as the collection and distribution of books, the acquisition of pictures, and the sustenance of necessitous literary and scientific men. We are, however, led to believe that in these matters they are less efficient than in the case of the making of roads, the

[1] The case for subventioned Opera has been ably summarized in the 1st chapter of Sir Charles Stanford's *Studies and Memories*, q.v.

supervision of shipping, and the control of such things as education, means of communication, and industry in general. It is therefore argued that the State would be an inefficient director of a National Opera House. This is, of course, no argument that it would not give us a better system than any we have managed to evolve hitherto. Furthermore, it would be "National," that is to say, that it would justify its existence by the production of English works. Here we have the kernel of the argument, but it must be remembered that there is no general law of the universe to prevent an individual impresario—especially an impresario who is unhampered by monetary considerations—from founding and directing a genuine school of English Opera. The accomplishment of this task may be difficult, and may require an extreme degree of sympathy, foresight, and financial courage; but it is only hindered by the same set of causes which at present deters the State from assuming what are asserted to be its responsibilities.

On all these complicated questions of national Opera I must confess that I find it difficult to reconcile Mr. Beecham's many printed utterances. Prior to his Covent Garden season of February-March, 1910, he set forth his views in a preliminary brochure. This interesting booklet contains an exposition of the reasons which led him to inaugurate the season in question, and these reasons, contained in his first two paragraphs, are as follows:

> "The question as to the amount of interest in Opera that exists, whether latent or otherwise, in this country is an open one. Here, as elsewhere, certain singers of established

reputation never fail to attract large audiences, but crowds such as nightly fill the countless opera-houses on the Continent are drawn from a far more serious section of art-lovers. Does there, or does there not, exist in England a public ready to take intelligent and continuous interest in music-drama *per se* if it had the chance?

It is in order to find out what is the true answer to this question that the present enterprise—the Thomas Beecham Opera Season—has been inaugurated, for unless there is a real demand for opera, any attempt to found a permanent National Opera House in which the best works, new and old, native and foreign, shall be regularly and adequately performed, is at least premature."

These two paragraphs, read in the light of the interview with the *Observer* representative, leave one a little in doubt as to what Mr. Beecham's real views—if any—are. The statement in the interview is very definite as to the undesirability of a National Opera House: on the other hand, the two paragraphs quoted above appear to place the establishment of this "preposterous, futile and idiotic" institution as the ultimate goal which he has in mind.

These questions, however, have at the present moment no more than an academic interest, and perhaps, without injustice to Mr. Beecham, we may interpret his statement, "I believe absolutely in the individual, opera should be international," as referring, the first part, to the financial magnates who control our Operatic enterprises; the second,

to the unfortunate composers who have to supply the operas. This is, of course, capable of discussion from many points of view, artistic, commercial, and even moral; but I am only concerned now with that aspect of the situation which looks towards the English composer, and I think a moment's consideration will show that it places him in his old position of disadvantage when he is competing with his foreign rival. The French, the German, and the Italian composer has each his protected market at home, where he is ensured a hearing both by the wishes of his compatriots and by the actual legislation of his country. The English composer, on the other hand, has no such home institution on whose sense of patriotism and fairplay he can rely. Indeed, no two words could be found which would more accurately *mis*-describe the Englishman's attitude towards his own composers than the words "patriotism" and "fair-play." I do not say that "fair-play" in the sense of "free trade" exists abroad. It does not; for no countries are more completely insular and protectionist in art—and rightly so—than France and Germany. But there is in both these countries and in Italy a strong determination that the first chance shall be at the disposal of the native musician, while here the public seems to glory in maintaining a long string of foreigners who, with their parasites and go-betweens, are all bound together by their mutual desire for English gold and their ill-concealed contempt for the people who supply it.

But it is not merely that there is a national and patriotically subventioned Opera abroad and none here; for when the foreign composer has produced a successful, or a partially successful, or even a

wholly unsuccessful work abroad, he can often (and does actually, especially in the lighter forms of Opera) rely on an "individual" manager to take the "international" view of the case and to import his goods into England. On the other hand, the possibility of the English composer gaining entry to

> the perched roosts
> And nests in order ranged

of Operatic Europe is about equal to the probable success of the "tame villatic fowl" if he tried to turn the tables on the "evening dragon." In a word, it is nil, and English composers would probably have more sympathy with Mr. Beecham's broad views on "individualism" and "internationalism" if he could broaden them still further and persuade the Continental nations to adopt them. Free trade and an open market may possibly in the future give us the best and healthiest conditions under which musical art can flourish (though it is not to these conditions that Europe owes its present state of artistic development), but our conditions give us neither the one nor the other. At home we have free trade and a market open to all: abroad there is a closed market and a subsidized manufacturer.

In discussing this question we must remember that, though the artistic interests of the composer and the impresario are sometimes identical, their commercial interests are generally opposed to each other; and it is the more necessary to concentrate attention on this point, because in England, where we have practically no School of Opera, the prime necessity for such a school is the production of English operas in the theatre. The impresario can

help in this, but only as a middleman, whose business it is to keep his finger close to the public pulse. He can do no more than this, and, if he neglect to do it, he is merely loading his ship with unsaleable wares, and is bound for Port Disaster. It is to the composer, not to the impresario, that we have to look in the long run for the foundation of such a school, and it is the composer who has to make his painful headway in the face of these baffling "international" conditions. The "individual" impresario feels their force, it is true, but it is the force of a wind which he can pick up in most European waters, and which he will always find blowing in his favour.

With regard to the "first production" of English operas Mr. Beecham's record is public property. Besides reviving such works as "Ivanhoe," "The Wreckers," [1] and "Shamus O'Brien," he has produced one new English work "for the first time," Mr. George Clutsam's charming one-act opera, "A Summer's Night." [2] This is not a very great record when we compare it with his multifarious activities in the realms of foreign and "boom" Opera; but still one is better than none, and in English Opera we must be humbly thankful for even the smallest mercies. Mr. Beecham has also presented "for the first time in England" M. Delius's "A Village Romeo and Juliet," a work which had already "achieved the greatest popular success in Germany." [3] It is unfortunate that on the latter occasion, when Mr. Beecham had devoted

[1] Miss Smyth's work was translated into English by herself.

[2] I omit all reference to Herr D'Albert's "Tiefland," as it seems doubtful, for many reasons, whether it can be properly spoken of as an "English opera."

[3] *Preliminary Brochure, Beecham Opera Season, Feb.-March*, 1910.

his great artistic resources to the production of a work by a British-born composer, his efforts did not meet with the public appreciation which he expected; and it appears that in this matter he considers the public at fault. A representative of the *St. James's Gazette*, who had been privileged to hear his views on this topic, stated in that paper[1] that "Mr. Beecham had been a good friend to British music, and he was naturally disappointed at the response his attempts to arouse interest in the works of native Opera-makers had met with during his recent season."

The reference is undoubtedly to M. Delius's ill-fated work, a work which Mr. Beecham is understood to have mounted from sincere feelings of artistic admiration and friendship. But, leaving out of the question entirely the point as to whether M. Delius really answers—except in a purely technical and legal sense—to the description, "a native Opera-maker,"[2] one may ask, is not Mr. Beecham a little unreasonable in blaming the London public for its chilling reception of this work? Both at the dress rehearsal and at the first performance the opinion seemed to be unanimous that, despite a certain poetical charm and an undoubtedly high level of musicianship, the work made little impression owing to its want of characterization and theatrical vitality. The peculiar inanity of a plot which might have collapsed at any moment after

[1] May 14th, 1910.

[2] In the *Preliminary Brochure* (Feb.-March, 1910) Mr. Beecham states that M. Delius was "born at Bradford, Yorks, of wealthy parents," that he studied "at the Leipzig Conservatory," and that he "has lived for the past twenty years in rural seclusion near Paris."

the first act (if the hero and heroine had seen the obvious and easy solution of their troubles in *marriage* instead of *suicide*) introduced into the performance what appeared to an English audience to be an element of irritation, and even of laughter. Naturally under these circumstances Mr. Beecham's quaint prediction that this opera "would make the strongest appeal to the musical laity as well as to the academical professor"[1] could not be justified by the event.

Indeed, it would seem that we have not yet made good the defect to which a musical critic has lately called attention—the defect of all recent "operatic undertakings in this country,—that the public has had to put up with what was given it instead of having placed before it what it wants."[2] This, of course, takes us back to the very large question of popular approval, on which I have already laid emphasis in a previous chapter. From the standpoint of English Operatic interests I may, however, point out the fundamental fact which governs the whole situation. It is that the order of nature can no more be reversed in this form of mental activity than in any other, and that the essential preliminary to the foundation of a School of English Opera is the production of English

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Morning Post*, January 17, 1910. The same writer enforced his point later when discussing Mr. Beecham's revival of "Ivanhoe." "The one matter for regret after all these years is that the lesson taught does not seem to have been remembered. Those responsible for the provision of Opera seem to be still blind to the fact that operatic knowledge in this country is still limited; consequently the taste for that art-form does not cover a wide range; the public therefore will support what it wants to see and not what the managers want it to see" (*Morning Post*, Feb. 28, 1910).

works written, not with the object of outraging the English prejudices in the matter, but in the frank and healthy determination to accept these prejudices, and to offer the public an art-form satisfactory both to itself and to the composer. This is really the lesson in history which we can learn from France, Italy, and Germany, and until we have learnt that lesson English Opera will continue to be the unsatisfactory and ridiculous make-believe which nine people out of every ten regard as its divinely appointed lot.

On all these essential points—as opposed to the ephemeral questions of immediate success—Mr. Beecham's views are, as far as the public goes, something of a mystery. He began his Operatic career in London as the—I will not say "avowed" —but "acclaimed" champion of the English composer. At His Majesty's Theatre his performances of Miss Smyth's "The Wreckers" were recognized in the press as a landmark in the history of English art, and the happy forecasts which were then made received a royal cachet when, on the last night of the season, he was presented to King Edward VII. A general feeling at once arose both in public and private circles that in Mr. Beecham the English composer had at length secured a friend whose material resources enabled him to give effect to his (supposed) artistic sympathies. Musical London had many times before found Operatic enthusiasts with an artistic equipment perhaps as great as Mr. Beecham; but in each case the necessary financial weight was wanting. Here at last was the combination of the two things—brains and money.

It is only fair to say that, however often these statements have been repeated in the press and

elsewhere, Mr. Beecham himself has never (as far as I am aware) made any such claim. On the contrary, he has distinctly repudiated any idea of "embarking on a course of propaganda in the interests of this or that school for which he may have a personal predilection," and has, indeed, foreshadowed a policy "when the tastes of the opera-going public will have been more completely ascertained" of reviving "more of the glorious works of the classic past."[1] The inglorious works of the unclassic present do not, of course, appear to any great advantage in this statement, but its English champions must remember that it is they themselves who have made out Mr. Beecham's patent of "Comes Saxonici Littoris," and, however earnestly they may have hailed him as the saviour of his country, they have no right to charge him with inconsistency because he has only seen fit to expend a certain amount of his energies in the production of new English works.

On the other hand, it would be affectation to deny that—apart from the mere question of inconsistency—there is some dissatisfaction with Mr. Beecham's methods, and this dissatisfaction is by no means confined to the (at present very small) class of English Opera enthusiasts. The immense area covered by his activities is witness to his remarkable personal qualities and the strength of his financial position; but to an onlooker these energies have seemed to manifest themselves in a somewhat ill-arranged, almost chaotic, manner. One would have preferred—even in opposition to one's own most cherished convictions—some simpler and more

[1] *Preliminary Brochure, Beecham Opera Comique Season*, May-July, 1910.

direct scheme of activity, provided it bore evidence within itself of careful plan and determined pre-arrangement. In these matters Mr. Beecham had more than one ready-made public to whom he might have appealed: he might have taken the strait path and made himself a new public; but, apart from a vague desire to do as many astonishing things as possible in the shortest time at his disposal, he seems to have been unable to make up his mind to any definite course of action. It is almost impossible to suppose that he has not considered deeply the fundamental difficulties of the Operatic position in London, or that he imagines that he can solve any of these difficulties by such material pressure as the promiscuous, polyglot, huddling-on of one opera after another; and yet that is the conclusion to which one is driven.

It would, of course, be wholly unfair to judge Mr. Beecham's achievements when he has not yet got beyond the stage of feeling his way at the outset of his career; and we must not overlook the fact that his activities have probably been moulded to a large extent by the exceptionally difficult circumstances in which he has been placed. He has had to take the field with such forces and armaments as were waiting the word of command, and in some directions—such as the encouragement which he has offered our native conductors and singers, and the delightfully buoyant spirit which he has infused into some of his revivals—he has earned everyone's gratitude.

But, even when we make allowance for all his embarrassments of circumstance and his counterbalancing advantages of financial weight, we are compelled to acknowledge a certain distractedness

of attack as if from all points at once, a want of concentration, a sort of "hen-wittedness" of effort for which it is difficult to account. On one of the cardinal points alone—that of the employment of English in the theatre—which, in great measure, should have governed his attempt to find out if there is "a public ready to take intelligent and continuous interest in music-drama *per se*"—he seems to have taken no decided line. It is not that one would dictate to him what line was the most advisable, but that one is chagrined to find him taking all the lines at the same time. This may in part be due to the pressure of circumstances, but it is a question whether it would not have been better to omit some part of his fevered activities and, by adequate provision, to master these circumstances.

Mr. Beecham has given us original English in the theatre: he has himself provided, and used, translations: he has also provided, and omitted to use, translations: he has engaged foreigners to sing in their own languages to English audiences: he has even affronted his audience by permitting a return to the "barbarous manner"[1] of Handel's time when bilingual performances were tolerated:[2] he has presented us with the spectacle of a company of nervous Anglo-Saxons, of whom perhaps only a couple were on more than nodding terms with the German language, struggling through a German opera in the original; and this has found its ludicrous

[1] See "Handel" (Grove, p. 648).

[2] It is interesting to note that a recent bilingual performance of the duet from Act II. of "Tristan und Isolde" at a London Symphony Orchestra concert provoked an immediate protest from the Wagner Association.

counterpart in a performance before a London audience of an Italian version of a French opera based upon the English of William Shakespeare.[1]

These are indeed strange doings, and, at the end of them, Mr. Beecham opened the New Year by stating[2] in big capitals that he was "profoundly dissatisfied" with the result of his year's work. With this dissatisfaction there is, I think, a general agreement, but it is impossible that anyone with a clear idea of the amount of energy and money expended in this year's work can fail to sympathize with him in his disappointment, more especially when he gives, as the reason for his dissatisfaction, that "nobody ever comes to see his productions"; but when he goes on to say that "a year ago people cherished the fond delusion that it was only necessary for opera to be given on a large scale for everyone to take it up, especially opera in English," one can only open one's eyes in astonishment, and enquire who on earth the people can have been whom Mr. Beecham found "cherishing this fond delusion." Surely if one thing can be more certain than another it is that the "scale" has nothing at all to do with the question. At that game there are plenty of firms in the world who can beat the Operatic Impresario every time, and yet who do not compete with him.

But it is not a question of "scale": it is, as Mr. Beecham ought to know, a question of public likes and dislikes—in fact, a psychological question; and it is just in meeting that question with a wise and deliberate prevision and in answering it once for all that he might have rendered the country a great

[1] "A public ready to take *intelligent*... interest in music-drama"!

[2] In the *Observer*, Jan. 1, 1911.

service. If he had selected only six new representative English operas, even if he had had to commission these works and wait quietly for their completion: if he had mounted them with the utmost finish possible and performed them often enough to give them an adequate chance of success: if he had been prepared to stake his money and his artistic conscience on this experiment, he would have secured a definite answer to a question which has been constantly asked, but to which no satisfactory reply has ever been forthcoming, simply because the questioners have never had the necessary means to secure it.

But I do not mean to narrow my argument to the interests of English Opera. He might have done this with German, French, or Italian Opera, new or old: he might have done it with Chinese, Hindu, or Esquimaux Opera (if such things exist), with anything, in fact, that bespoke plan and premeditation; and we should have been so much farther forward in our elimination of the "impossible." But, as things are, we are no farther forward, or, to quote his own words, "the position is just the same as it was a year ago."[1]

One is glad to say that Mr. Beecham "cherishes no fond delusions" on the question of his much-advertized productions of "Elektra" and "Salome." He gives it as his opinion that "if you get an elephant to stand on one foot on the top of the Nelson Column you will draw a much larger crowd than twenty-five Salomes";[2] but what is amazing and

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] That is to say, "a much larger crowd than twenty-five Salomes would draw in the theatre," not the other meaning—though, of course, a crowd of twenty-five Salomes in Trafalgar Square might compete with the elephant.

profoundly disturbing is that, knowing this fact, he should have attempted to solve the very serious problems of Opera in England by giving performances that may be normal to the developed German mind, but which are wholly abnormal to the undeveloped Operatic Englishman. Indeed the condition into which the London public was inflamed before the production of "Elektra" was—with all respect—neither healthy nor musical, and the methods adopted to secure this inflammatory condition did not differ greatly from the methods which Barnum might have adopted had he been the proprietor of Mr. Beecham's hypothetical elephant. On this subject I need say no more, nor shall I touch on the delicate ethical and social points to which I alluded when I first referred to Mr. Beecham's name.

I have devoted considerable space to his record, not only because he himself is an undoubted force in our musical life, but also because it seems to me to be characteristic of a certain type of Operatic energy which has been recurrent in this country, a type which approaches the solution of grave national problems with an easy detachment from its surroundings. In these cases success and failure—I do not mean monetary or personal success and failure—are almost matters of chance. The rôle of propagandist is—as in Mr. Beecham's case—definitely and publicly repudiated. Unfortunately, nothing satisfactory has ever been achieved in the world of art except by means of the driving force of a sincere and enthusiastic propaganda. Without that one can no more attempt to thread a line through the tangled skein of our English Operatic conditions than one could hope to reform our army organization by presenting the nation with a dealer's collection of bows and arrows,

flintlocks and blunderbusses, garnished with a Lee-Metford and a couple of heavy pieces from Krupp's.

Energy and momentum are good. But—as in physics—there must also be direction, and this direction must come—in artistic matters—from the heart that feels and the mind that foresees. The qualities indeed that enable an impresario to stage revivals of old and well-tried operas, or to ship some huge Continental success and bring it up the Thames on the big flood-tide of advertisement, are far different from those other qualities of mind by whose aid alone he can penetrate and reveal the deep spaces of the national consciousness. That these deep, silent spaces exist (still unvisited) no student of our history can well doubt, and it is their very silence and depth that should fascinate the explorer. If he undertakes the journey he may have to suffer the darkness and the difficulties of a tangled forest-path, but this is as nothing to the hope that, with the next turning, the forest will end, and he will break through into the open to find the sunlight and the enchanted castle.

CHAPTER VI

OPERA BOOKS

THE history of English Opera Books is, to say the best of it, dismal; and it begins with the dismal name of Nahum Tate.[1] It is true that amongst its earliest writers there are two names of distinction—Dryden and Gay,—but for the most part English Opera Books have, until lately, been written by a set of literary mongrels more careless and incompetent than any that has ever disgraced the literary annals of a country. It is difficult to attempt a comparison between them and any other class of dramatists or poets, because they stand alone, *sui generis*, unlike anything that has ever existed in heaven, on earth, or in the waters underneath the earth. Intellectually we cannot call them mere literary hacks, whilst we certainly cannot dignify them with the title "Sons of Poetry": socially they rank somewhere between the penniless poetaster and the wealthy amateur: artistically there is only one word which, in its Elizabethan sense, accurately describes them—the word "naughty," and they count in their ranks the only man to whom the word "Poet" has ever been applied as a term of reproach.

[1] Who collaborated with Purcell in "Dido and Aeneas."

This curious race of men asserts, as I have hinted, a certain social superiority. They guard us (in their work) from forgetting that their real business in life is something quite different from the writing of lyrical dramas. All of them—prosperous actors, critics, theatrical managers, and so on—"drop into poetry," one guesses, from an amiable condescension, perhaps even from some form of personal eccentricity; but our feelings of gratitude to them for this condescension are largely tempered by the reflection that, in their unpremeditated strains, they rarely bestow on us a single line of real poetry, and that their "unpremeditation" is often carried so far as to include a disregard for even the elementary decencies of English grammar. This gentry is united by two bonds of brotherhood: first, their common knowledge of tricky, theatrical clap-trap; and, second, the tie of common gentility—the big copper-plate "Esq." on their title-pages. Like another "Squyer," who rode out long ago from Southwark to Canterbury, they are

"Syngynge... or flowtynge al the day,"

but their songs are not the songs of an early world, "fressh as is the moneth of May," but the dull, sophisticated lays of a people unconscious of anything outside the four brick walls of the theatre. So anxious, indeed, are they that their poetry shall never rise beyond the meanest and most trivial subjects that, if we had to sum up their aims, their aspirations, and their fears, we should be tempted to quote (with a difference of meaning) two glowing lines by their hierarch "Alfred Bunn Esq.":

"If you but raise your tone,
You number at once your days." [1]

[1] "The Maid of Artois," by Balfe and Bunn.

Their beginning was not so bad. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century we find that those opera-lyrics which were not mere distortions of existing poetry, were written in a sort of good, strong, up-standing English. There were plenty of Anglo-Saxon words mixed with sudden, and often happily chosen Latinisms. With both of these Purcell showed his matchless power of combining English words and musical sounds; but even in his day there were signs of that slovenliness which was, a century later, to infect the whole brood of Operatic poets, and result in a literary style diseased and feeble beyond all belief.

To a poet the problem of Operatic composition should not have been difficult, for none of his primitive devices of prosody had, even then, the smallest value in the presence of the highly developed rhythmic devices of music. Plain, strong, simple English was the only necessity, but it almost seems that when a poet—even a great poet—was called on to provide "words for music" he was at the same time attacked by a sort of mental palsy which destroyed the freedom and sometimes even the sanity of his utterance. So began the long catalogue of verbal inversions and distortions that has made the Operatic poet a by-word in our history.

It is, unhappily, only too easy to select very bad instances of these faults even in the seventeenth century, but, as a fair example, I may quote a lyric written by Dryden for Purcell's "King Arthur,"

> "Shepherd, shepherd, leave decoying,
> Pipes are sweet a summer's day,
> Let us music be enjoying
> Thus to beauty tribute pay.
>
> Here with leaves and flow'rs entwining
> Trip we nimbly o'er the ground,

For the past have no repining,
Play and dance a merry round."[1]

where, in two short stanzas, we have only one satisfactory line ("Pipes are sweet a summer's day"). The other seven have, it is true, a certain level of quiet, pleasant sound which is in keeping with the subject, but, of these seven, at least four contain deplorable inversions of language, one a slipshod mistake in grammar, and one is mere padding. In the two unutterably bad third lines of each stanza—"Let us music be enjoying" and "For the past have no repining"—the reader may see concentrated the virus that has afflicted English Opera books and translations since first they were written. I do not, of course, cite this lyric as more than a type of the verse which a great poet and a great musician considered "good enough for music." But it must be remembered that, except in the case of a few ballad-operas of the early eighteenth century, this species of distorted and slovenly lyric has remained a constant feature in our Operatic history from Purcell's day almost to our own. In the late seventeenth century there are some "Lyrics specially designed for music" which are of a much better quality. Such is the admirable song in "King Arthur," "Come if you dare"; but, on the whole, they contain little that is inspiring, and the wonder really is at the greatness of Purcell's genius and his aptitude for word-painting which enabled him to carry off with ease the

[1] This lyric appears quite differently in Mr. Fuller-Maitland's edition of "King Arthur," where it is set down as "altered from Dryden." Dr. Ernest Walker happily sums up the Operatic lyrics of Purcell's period as "Scanty blossoms of poetry among acres of bombast" (*A History of Music in England*, p. 166).

dead-weight of his lyrics. The average merit of these may be fairly judged from the following lines, which, in their mixed childishness and bluff rudeness, appear to me characteristic of the time:

"Let the Soldiers rejoyce with a generall voice
And the Senate new honours decree 'em
Who, at his Armies head, struck the fell Monster Dead
And so boldly and bravely did free 'em.

To Mars let 'em raise and their Emperors praise
A Trophy of the armies own making
To Maximian too some Honours are due
Who joyn'd in the brave undertaking."[1]

I have already explained how, in the early eighteenth century, Italian Opera came into England and found there a society where it was adopted by the upper classes as a purely foreign culture, but rejected by the general mass of the people chiefly on the score of its artificiality. This artificiality—for so it appeared to them—consisted of the lyrical declamation and recitative, and it was in conscious opposition to this new musical system that the English Ballad-Opera was called into existence. Opera of this sort was really not a musician's affair at all. The ordinary way was for a litterateur to take existing and generally well-known folk tunes and to write new words to fit the old music. The musician was a secondary person, concerned only with the technical details of harmony and orchestration.

As an example of this method I may instance the old tune "Greenwich Park," and quote the lyric, as given in Chappell's *Old English Popular Music*, side by side with the lyric (to the same music) in Gay's

[1] From Purcell's "Dioclesian," written and adapted by Betterton from Beaumont and Fletcher.

"Beggar's Opera," where it appears as a drinking song:

Popular Version.	*Gay's Version.*
Come sweet lass	Come sweet lass
This bonny weather	Let's banish sorrow
Let's together	'Till tomorrow
Come sweet lass	Come sweet lass
Let's trip it on the grass;	Let's take a chirping Glass;
Ev'rywhere	Wine can clear
Poor Jockey seeks his dear	The vapours of Despair
And unless you appear	And make us light as air
He sees no beauty here.	Then drink, and banish care.

This is one of the poorest lyrics in "The Beggar's Opera," and is only quoted as an example of the early eighteenth century method. It might have been thought that in this class of opera the poet, fettered as he was by the unusual necessity of setting music to words, would have produced something specially vapid and meaningless. On the contrary, we find in all these ballad-operas, and especially in "The Beggar's Opera," a certain lightness, vivacity, and ease which are as charming as they are unexpected. Such numbers as "Cease your funning" and "How happy could I be with either" are too well known to need quotation, but the following less-known lyric, also from "The Beggar's Opera," will give a capital idea of Gay's bright, pleasant style:

"If the Heart of a Man is deprest with Cares,
The Mist is dispelled when a Woman appears:
Like the Notes of a Fiddle she sweetly, sweetly
Raises the Spirits, and charms our Ears.
Roses and Lillies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweeter than those.
Press her,
Caress her,

With blisses
Her kisses
Dissolve us in Pleasure and soft Repose."

One only needs to read these lines aloud to feel how trippingly they come off the tongue. This is, of course, Ballad-opera at its best, and it does not always keep this high level. Still in most of the numbers there is some figure or turn of thought which holds the thing together and gives it a force which is not often present in the lyrics written for our present-day entertainments. It is easy to quote many such lyrics, but, as an example neither better nor worse than the average, this little song (from "Silvia, or The Country Burial"[1]) will serve:

"A Maid, tho' beautiful and chaste
Like a Cypher stands alone;
Man, like a Figure by her placed,
Makes her Worth and Value known.

The Tyrant, Man, fast bound for Life,
To rule she takes upon her;
Whene'er a Maid is made a wife
She becomes a Dame of Honour."

It must be remembered that many of these "operas" were really not much more than improvised "side-shows" performed at so-and-so's "Great Theatrical Booth in Bartholomew Fair."[2] There is consequently in some of them, a vein of whining morality which is as characteristic of early eighteenth century popular ideals as it is repugnant to our own. In others—such as "Flora's Opera, or, Hob in the Country-Wake," "The Devil to

[1] By George Lillo, published 1731.

[2] *E.g.* "The Quaker's Opera," 1728.

Pay," and "The Mock Doctor"—there is an almost incredible naiveté of expression.[1] How nearly a lyric can go to saying nothing at all can be seen in the following song which I suppose we may look on as an early English prototype of Leporello's "Catalogue Song" in "Don Giovanni":

"All the Women who saw him were fond of the Squire,
He was Love's Remedy, he their desire;
In Venice, in Turkey, in Paris and Rome,
He was the Nosegay, the pleasing perfume."[2]

The last of these ballad-operas—"Galligantus"—appeared in 1758, and within four years of that time the artificial Arne was endeavouring to express the first syllable of the words "Fly soft ideas"[3] by means of 107 consecutive notes of music, and even inviting his soprano (after she had sung these 107 notes) to begin her request over again with a fresh note, thereby giving one the impression that her trapeze-work was not the beginning of a song, but only the end of a private gymnastic exhibition which she had absent-mindedly transferred from her dressing-room to the stage. In music of this sort the words were of no consequence. The most an author could do was to supply a smoothly flowing text; and even this did not matter, for, however uncouth and angular the words might be, the singers, trained to sing English by the study of Italian, would very

[1] These were the days of such advertisements as the following:—"At the Upper end of St. Martin's Lane ... will be presented a new opera ... call'd Jephtha's Rash Vow, or The Virgin Sacrificed. With several comical entertainments of Punch." (From *The Post-Boy*, Feb. 28 and March 2, 1709-1710).

[2] From "The Village Opera," published 1729.

[3] One of Mandane's airs in "Artaxerxes."

soon claim their prescriptive right to lop off the consonants, smudge out the vowels, and, in a word, to translate the English into their own favourite frog-language.

As a specimen lyric of this period, which it must be remembered was the period not only of Dr. Arne but also of Dr. Johnson, I append the words of a song sung by Mandane in "Artaxerxes":

> "Monster away!
> From chearful day
> To the barren desart fly!
> Paths explore
> Where Lyons roar
> And devouring Tygers lie."[1]

The traitorous Italianisms with which one English doctor was entertaining his audiences at Covent Garden had, of course, no more permanent effect on the national style than the ponderous Latinisms which the other English doctor was pouring out from Bolt Court. In both cases the artificiality of the medium provoked a reaction, and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century we find a type of opera midway between that of the ballad-opera and the more developed school of the early nineteenth century. The names associated with this intermediate type of opera are Dibdin, Storace, Hook, Shield, Michael Kelly, and some few others. On its music I need not dwell. Much of it is of a quietly pleasing character which, in the nature of things, is in exact contradiction to the national spirit of the times. In the lyrics, however, many of which, it must be remembered, were written during the lifetime of Wordsworth,

[1] The composer himself translated the "Artaserse" of Metastasio into English.

Byron, and Burns, there is a quality perhaps lower than any that has ever existed in English literature. At this period one cannot quote the following stanza,

"I hung my Lyre on a tree
And cry'd with aching heart
'Ye Gods! How cruel your decree!
Must I and Julia part?'"[1]

as a specimen of *bad* but of *good* Operatic poetry. A similar criticism may be made of most of Dibdin's nautical effusions, which present, as a rule, not a summary of our national glory but only a particularized and not very pleasant picture of the sea-port manners of his time. The following "Requiem," from his "Trip to Portsmouth," is a ludicrous, almost sickening, example of mental agility. The author proposes his subject in three miserable threadbare lines, scoops up the whole of English history in one more, and then makes a wild, awkward dash at his real topic—a compliment to King George the Third:

"Ye sovereigns of wide Ocean's waves
To heroes long enshrin'd in graves
A requiem let us sing:
I Alfred, Henry, Edward name:
Then William our deliv'rer came;
May future ages BRUNSWICK own,
Perpetual heir to Britain's throne;
So here's God save the King."[2]

Let us hope that the "heroes long enshrin'd in graves" did not turn in them when this song was

[1] From "The Padlock," by Dibdin; Words by the author of "The Maid of the Mill." 1768.

[2] Dibdin wrote only the songs in this opera. The orchestral portion and the dances were by Arne. 1773. The above quotation is the third of three verses.

written. Many of the lyrics of this age are so indelicate as to be unprintable nowadays, but plenty remain which, quite harmless even to our taste, yet show a complete absence of "point." They seem to be of about the order of lyric which any stage-manager might scribble on his cuff during a stage-wait at rehearsal. If the reader wishes to see how close the art of the Operatic poet can come to the aimless gabble of the "certified lunatic," he should read the lyrics in such works as "The Grand Dramatic Romance of Blue Beard or Female Curiosity," by "George Coleman the Younger Esq. and Michael Kelly." I shall quote only one of these, with the observation that, as I do not pretend to understand it, I merely copy it from the original edition, "Printed for Dussek and Co: Music Sellers to the Royal Family":

He.—Yes Beda
Thus Beda
When I melancholy grow
This melancholy heart tinking soon can drive away.
She.—When hearing
Sounds chearing
Then we bligthe and jolly grow
How do you while to you Shaccabac I play.
Tink a tank.

The first departures from this intermediate type of opera were made by Sir Henry Bishop, whose musical activity lasted, roughly, from 1810 to 1840. He undoubtedly made some improvements in English Opera, and handed it on to his successors (Balfe, Wallace, Macfarren, and Benedict),[1] both sweetened

[1] Barnett stands rather apart from and above the other English Operatic composers who flourished in the first seventy years of the century. His principal work, "The Mountain Sylph" (1834)

and purified. Nor did the improvement cease with his death, for if we judge Wallace's best work, not by our own standards, but by the standards of his English predecessors, we shall be forced to allow it a certain elementary vigour and dramatic spontaneity which were unknown till his day. I do not mean to say that this judgment can be upheld if we apply the standards of contemporary French and German Opera or of English Opera as Purcell wrote it. We must judge Wallace's work as we would that of an early Italian painter, not by the freedom and ease of his successors, but by the stiffness and awkwardness of his predecessors.

It is, however, the literary, not the musical, side of the Operatic movement that engages our attention at the moment. Unfortunately, most of the popular impressions of "English Opera" are connotations founded on the literary material of this time. I must therefore attempt the necessary but difficult task of giving the reader some idea of its strange unreality and its remoteness from all human experience. It is, then, an Opera of no-where and no-time: of men and women who never have existed and never can exist: an Opera of sham sentiment and sham motive, of artificiality and bunkum. Its dwelling-place is a fantastic Nightmare-land, peopled, not by human beings, but by dismal theatrical ghosts and corpses, each one of whom seems to have borrowed a moral rig-out second-hand from Pecksniff. In this doleful country dense black shadow alternates with the dim light of guttering candles, and over all hangs the dingy fog of Wardour Street.

is superior in charm and imaginative power to anything of his time, and is undoubtedly a landmark in our Operatic history.

If we peer through the fog we can half discern fierce crowds of Banditti (belted and bewigged), with Moslems, Crusaders, Robbers, and Villains, figures of paint and pasteboard, all clutching their daggers and pistols as they tip-toe on to the 1-2-3-4 of the music. Every one of these terrible fellows "stands in peril dire,"[1] and is ready to shed his last drop of grease-paint in defence or defiance. Perhaps, after a preliminary (and mirthless) drinking-song, they all go into ambush, nodding their explanations and intentions at each other in some such words as these:

"The Tyger couches in the wood
And waits to shed the trav'ler's blood,
And so couch we!
We spring upon him to supply
What men to our wants deny,
And so springs he!"[2]

Presently, that is to say if the "trav'ler" escapes them, they will pass the gloomy word:

"Some myst'ry dark lies here conceal'd,
But soon the truth will be reveal'd"[3]

and will steal out again in single file, to creep on all fours up and down mountains and search for treasure in caves and ruined graveyards. Nothing ever shakes their bloodthirsty unanimity. The soldiers may be already drawn up in two thin (and short) red lines from the Prompt side to the O.P. wings, either congratulating each other on their apparent safety,

[1] "The Amber Witch," by Wallace and Chorley.

[2] "The Maniac," by Bishop and S. J. Arnold.

[3] "Fair Rosamond," by Barnett. Book by Z. C. Barnett and F. Shannon.

"Comrades and friends, from war and strife,
Hither we come for a calmer life"[1]

or shouting their mutual encouragements:

"To arms! To arms! Prepare!
Upon the invaders rush!
To arms! To arms! Prepare!
At once the robbers crush!"[2]

but their martial chants will avail them nothing when they come to grips with their morose and murderous adversaries, for the only human weakness that besets this band of Operatic desperadoes is one which makes cold steel and poison the very bread and cheese of their existence. This weakness, amounting, I regret to say, almost to a chronic physical ailment, is their continual and pressing desire for "revenge." Indeed, in those far-off days when stage pirates and buccaneers were objects, not of amusement, but of terror, every respectable half-dozen of tenors and basses kept (somewhere handy) a dirty and inexplicable past which could only be cleansed by convenient 4-part references to blood and iron.

These musical cries for vengeance occur over and over again, and the following lines will show their average literary expression:

"Revenge!
The daring crew
Shall soon their treason rue!
Revenge!"[3]

[1] "The Enchantress," by Balfe, Bunn, and M. de St. Georges.

[2] Chorus of Soldiers in "The Maniac." The last line, "At once the robbers crush," is, of course, the usual Operatic English for "At once crush the robbers."

[3] These ten words make up the whole of the second act Finale in Bishop's "Maid Marian," "The poetry by J. R. Planché Esq."

We must, however, turn from the contemplation of these sombre and terrifying stage-crowds to the principal characters in the drama, and here we shall find a greater variety of sentiment but no greater likeness to real life.

Let us consider the men first, not from any want of politeness, but in order to save the more attractive features of the ladies for a later part of the chapter.

In appearance they are all very much as we see them on the outside covers of the songs—straight-nosed and pale-faced, sleek and whiskery, with dark romantic eyes, fat calves and oily hair, a mixture of Apollo and a German hair-dresser.[1] Their main preoccupation is the pursuit of "Glory," and especially of "Glory" achieved at the expense of "The Moslem," "The Saracen," or "The Moor." In this pursuit they exhibit a gentlemanly indifference to all forms of danger. Indeed, the unconcern with which they continually refer, in parenthesis, to the most disturbing events in their personal history, is as genteel as it is surprising:

> "As in her smile, where beauty play'd
> She bade me place my trust,
> A ball from yonder coppice laid
> My courser in the dust."[2]

A cavalier of this sort usually begins life as

> "A youthful Knight whose hopes are bent
> On Glory's bright career."[3]

It may be that he adopts this career in the same way that ordinary mortals adopt ordinary professions,

[1] Lumley's portrait, prefixed to his *Reminiscences*, gives one a very fair idea of the average Operatic hero of these days.

[2] "The Enchantress" (Bunn).

[3] "The Enchantress" (Bunn).

"But for no idle passion form'd
His high heroic mood;
Glory's sublimer charms alone
With lover's ardour woo'd,"[1]

or perhaps there may be a lady in the case and

"His rank and station are
To all such prospects an eternal bar:"[2]

he may have found the impossibility—in the passionate phrase of the poet Bunn—of

"calming rooted grief by all the mines of gold,"[3]

and may have adopted that sickly, broken-hearted pose which we now associate only with some of Dickens's minor characters:

"Jules de Montangon is my name—
My home—I have no home—
The brokenness of heart and fame
Pursues me where I roam."[4]

At any rate, the result is pretty sure to be the same:

"The only privilege can be
To worship and to die."[5]

If, however, he does not "worship and die" he levants, and we find him in Eastern parts uttering a great variety of defiant couplets and sentiments derogatory to all Moors, Saracens, and Moslems:

"This cursed Moor mars ev'ry pleasant plan,
And I must stop his mischief—if I can!"[6]

[1] "Guy Mannering," by Bishop and D. Terry.
[2] "The Enchantress" (Bunn).
[3] "The Maid of Artois" (Bunn).
[4] "The Maid of Artois" (Bunn).
[5] "The Bondman," by Balfe and Bunn.
[6] "The Bondman" (Bunn).

The consequence of these incautious speeches and of his generally uncompromising attitude on the subject of "Glory" is, of course, a good deal of bloodshed,—

"The foemen press, the gleaming brands blaze out"[1]

with the very unsatisfactory result for our poor friend that he is usually compelled, for reasons of sympathy not unconnected with the Pit and Gallery, to take the second place in the combat. Even on the rare occasions when he is victorious he is not at all likely to survive:

"The conquered foe is flying
. . . . .
But we are sadly dying"[2]

but, as a rule we may say that it is his fate to be both defeated and slaughtered by "The Moslem."

"From ev'ry wound rush'd forth a life
On the Moslem's crimson'd field."[3]

His death usually receives only a passing and vague reference:

"On hostile plains far, far away,
The Moorish Squadron braving,
He died a Hero's death—they say—
The Christian banner saving,"[4]

while his epitaph ("written by E. Fitzball, Esq.") is such as he himself would have wished it to be,—

[1] "The Talisman," by Balfe and Matthison.

[2] "The Amber Witch," by Wallace and Chorley.

[3] "Fair Rosamond" (Z. C. Barnett and F. Shannon).

[4] "The Heir of Vironi," by Bishop and J. Pocock. The word "died" is marked "Piangevole."

"With Glory's wreath entwine the brave."[1]

It is refreshing to turn to the other side of the picture and to be able to say that, when our hero is master of the situation, there is no doubt at all about that fact. In Palestine and Morocco he generally seems to feel that his early demise is a matter of tearful expectation on the part of the audience; but when he is, so to speak, on his own ground—that is to say in any other than those two countries—he has a mysterious but admirable manner in dealing with the most overwhelming odds. On the occasion of such encounters he assumes a "haughty mien" and addresses his opponents as "miscreants," "varlets," "minions," and "traitors," but it must be owned that his own descriptions of these affairs, after the event, are always models of that genteel circumspection which insists on the recognition of valour without condescending to its petty details. We have only to refresh our minds with his picture (on the cover) to know how he would describe his prowess to a lady:

"But the blade of my sword looked sharp and bright
As I flashed it forth in the dim twilight;
And the miscreants fled with a coward wail—
My pretty maiden why turn pale
When we are safe to tell the tale?"[2]

[1] "The Siege of Rochelle," by Balfe, "Poetry by E. Fitzball Esq." This symbolism of the unknown by means of vague Eastern, and especially Moorish, images is a curious and persistent feature in the early nineteenth century Opera. Even the "Harp in the air"

"hangs on the walls
Of the old Moorish halls."

[2] "The Amber Witch" (Chorley).

The last two lines of this lyric remind us that, beside the pursuit of "Glory's bright career," our hero has a second occupation—love-making. This, the immemorial privilege of handsome tenors and baritones, would be scarcely worth mentioning were it not that, in this period, we come across a type of passion so namby-pamby and almost sexless as to repay description. As a rule the gentleman addresses his lady-love in amatory couplets whose warmth does not exceed that which we should consider appropriate as between an aged Sunday school teacher and a promising pupil:

"Stay, stay! I have heard your story told
And would with you some converse hold.

. . . . .

The form I see doth my fancy strike;
Yes! and each feature such as a King might like!"[1]

and often his "frozen heart" is selected for special applause, as in the following lyric:

"In ancient times in Britain's isle
Lord Henry was well known,
No knight in all the land more famed
Or more deserv'd renown.

His heart was all on honour bent,
He ne'er could stoop to Love;
No Lady in the land had power
His frozen heart to move;

Yet in that bosom deem'd so stern
The kindest feelings dwelt;
Her tender tale, when Pity told,
It never fail'd to melt.

But for no idle passion form'd
His high heroic mood

[1] "The Maid of Artois" (Bunn).

Glory's sublimer charms alone
With Lover's ardour woo'd "[1]

and even when his heart is not represented as "frozen," he thaws into such a mournful, bread-and-butter lover that his plaintive lyrics can only be read nowadays as a skit on themselves. The following song, written apparently in "dead earnest," was sung in Bishop's "The Maniac, or The Swiss Banditti," by the most distinguished English baritone of his age:[2]

"Edmund left his Ella dear,
To roam upon the dang'rous wave;
She was the fairest of the fair,
And he the bravest of the brave.

Why from the maid did Edmund go?
And why did Ella drop the tear?
'Twas that he flew to meet the foe,
'Twas that her heart was chilled by fear.

But short the time fair Ella mourn'd
Her lover absent on the wave,
For soon he to her arms return'd,
And still the bravest of the brave."[3]

[1] "Guy Mannering" (D. Terry).

[2] Phillips. The date of this opera is 1810, that of Beethoven's "Fidelio" is 1805.

[3] Absurd as this ballad may seem, it is a characteristic and average specimen of its class. Such "gluey" lyrics were introduced into all the Operatic entertainments of the time. They were set either to simple and sometimes quite charming music, or else to music which demanded a very high degree of vocal skill. The reader may look at Isoline's song, "Here take my life" (in "The Maid of Artois") if he wishes to see how far a composer can go in setting words *against* their sense. In general, however, the words are at a lower level than the music. Many ballads, such as that in Bishop's "Maid Marian," beginning,

"'O let not' he said 'while yet I live
The cruel foe me take

Let us now turn from Edmund's raptures to see of what sort was the lady for whose sake he was willing to be "absent on the wave." On the outside covers of the music it must be allowed Ella has a certain trim-ankled, smooth-haired, and charming simplicity. She could not be mistaken for a tragedy queen or, be it said, for a ballet-girl. Her indoor "demi-toilette" is equally effective among Alpine cliffs, Italian lagoons, and Peruvian palaces, in all which situations she appears to be blissfully unconscious of the fearful geographical and human dangers by which she is surrounded. Like her Edmund, whose "high heroic mood" plunges him into such continual peril, she has a favourite (and much less dangerous) occupation—the pleasing and picturesque habit of reclining in grottoes.

This is Ella on the outside of the cover, but, when we turn the page, we are chagrined to find the real Ella not much more like life than Edmund. To begin with, she is always weeping or simpering, or doing both at once. From her standpoint this is perhaps inevitable, for she spends a great deal of her time in endeavouring to escape the wiles of bold, bad baritones:

> "And I must keep another secret too
> For sake of peace, nor tell my father how
> That bold, bad, man pursues me with his love"[1]

and the result is that she is in a constant state of flutter and agitation. If Edmund is with her and has

> But with those lips one sweet kiss give
> And cast me in the lake'"

are really not much above Dr. Johnson's parody, "I put my hat upon my head."

[1] "The Amber Witch" (Chorley).

dropped the faintest hint of his (very correct) intentions, she is at once all dismay and confusion :

> "What means this flutt'ring in my heart?
> These tears of joy too quick to start?"[1]

And even if she merely *thinks* he is at hand she goes off into her peculiar and characteristic form of heroics, whose essence is the unnatural arrangement of words:

> "But hark! A distant sound! He comes! My heart, be still!
> ... Ah no! that well-known step salutes not yet mine ear."[2]

Then again, Ella has a distressing and tearful way of continually asking for our sympathy, not for "Ella," but for "Ella in distress." She has three stock topics. These are, first, the loss of her property; second, the absence of her lover; and third, her strong but illogical preference for "humble love" to "gilded splendour." Her first card she plays in most of Bishop's operas, and she plays it in a very conventional manner. She usually begins by describing her early life, which, we are led to believe, was passed in narrow, but yet somehow extremely prosperous, circumstances. Her home was generally in one of those pastoral localities whose complete lack of houses renders them so effective on "back-cloths." Her father is represented to have been—(one is compelled to say "to have been," for he invariably perishes in the second stanza)—a sort of rural Uriah Heep, very 'umble, but very well able to look after the main chance.

[1] "The Brides of Venice," by Benedict and Bunn.

[2] "Fair Rosamond" (Z. C. Barnett and F. Shannon).

"My father's flocks adorn'd the plain,
Retirement's joys possessing"[1]

and to the description of these joys she usually devotes the first verse. In the second she refers vaguely to "ruthless war" or "th' invader's host," and in the third she comes down-stage and appeals for our pity as a sentimental but ruined orphan. Orynthia puts this appeal in a nut-shell:

"Fenced round by brake and lawn and wood
The Cottage of my Father stood;
A decent plenty once his share
And I was born a prosp'rous heir

But ruthless war soon marr'd our lot
In ruin lies that native cot;
That Sire too—where shall sorrow end?
Ah who shall prove the orphan's friend?"[2]

Of her second stock-topic—her absent lover—I have already given a masculine example in "Edmund and Ella." The feminine variant of this theme occurs frequently, for instance:

"At noon upon the beach I stood
And saw the waves depart,
Which bore upon their briny flood
The treasure of my heart"[3]

and no less frequent are her fallacious comparisons between "humble love" and "gilded splendour." She asks:

[1] "The Virgin of the Sun," by Bishop; "the poetry by F. Reynolds."

[2] "The Noble Outlaw," by Bishop and Mrs. Opie.

[3] "The Brides of Venice" (Bunn).

"Hath gilded splendour such rewards
As the pleasure which humble love accords?"[1]

and even puts up an unnecessarily plebeian appeal to be spared the privilege of high birth:

"From high birth and all its fetters
My kind stars my lot remove!
I shall envy not my betters,
Give me but the youth I love."[2]

It must be owned, however, that, in spite of her somewhat violent protestations of democratic feeling, Ella often shows a truly Pecksniffian delight in vague references to the "gilded throngs" of fashionable life. She is not above calling the attention of the "gilded throngs" themselves to their own social superiority:

"I bid ye welcome!
It calls forth thanks
To see around me
Fashion's chosen ranks"[3]

and, in whatever dreadful predicament she may be, she can always find time to drop in a gentle reminder that her proper sphere is the "hupper suckles":

"In vain with timid glance I try to pierce the dazzling crowd to see the noble form of him I love."[4]

The reader cannot fail to notice that in whatever Ella says, she always adopts a mode of expression just sufficiently removed from the expected to be uncomfortable. In her father's presence she may

[1] "The Siege of Rochelle" (Fitzball).
[2] "The Haunted Tower," by Storace.
[3] "The Bondman" (Bunn).
[4] "Fair Rosamond" (Z. C. Barnett and F. Shannon).

make some concessions to the commonplace and address him thus:

"Good-eve, my gentle father"

to which he will reply:

"Good-eve, my merry daughter."[1]

But, behind his back, she always refers to him as "My sire," or "that sire."[2] She will say:

"What joy to see my sire again."[3]

And it is not only in this particular connection that she adopts this curious phraseology, for both she and Edmund and, indeed, the whole *dramatis personæ* are naturally so mentally anæmic that they only call a spade a spade under the direst necessities of rhyme. I do not allude to their mere Latinisms or their belated imitations of the eighteenth century allegorical muse. Both these are common enough. They speak of a lamb who is attacked by a wolf

"conceal'd beneath a sheep's attire"[4]

and of an "eager charger" who

"spurns th' indented ground";[5]

they say "Belgia's fertile plain," meaning Belgium,[6] and "Gallia's sword," meaning the French army.[6]

[1] "The Amber Witch" (Chorley).

[2] See above, "The Orphan's Friend."

[3] "Fair Rosamond" (Z. C. Barnett and F. Shannon).

[4] "The Siege of Rochelle" (Fitzball).

[5] "Robin Hood," by Shield. Book by L. Macnally (and E. Lysaght?).

[6] "The Slave," by Bishop. "The poetry by T. Morton."

But it is when they are talking about themselves as men and women that we are made to feel most strongly their remoteness from humanity. To begin with, we never hear of them doing anything so vulgar as merely "being born." At most they allude, in a stock phrase, to the days, when their feet "lightly pressed" their "native heather," "turf," "sod," "sand," or whatever other soil their parents may have been located on at the time. Then, in the third or fourth act, when they are perhaps wandering round the ruined homestead, they again refer to themselves as "heavily pressing" the same "heather," "turf," "sod," "sand," or what not. By the time they have grown up this method of speech has, of course, become an obsession. They seem to have lost all power of direct expression, and common words like "I," "me," "you," "man," "woman," and "love" have dropped completely out of their vocabulary. If they wish to say that two people love one another, they get no nearer the idea of "love" than an implication. The two people are said to "stray" through the world "like two ring doves."[1] If, again, they wish to express the idea of a man and a woman singing together, they are compelled, by the exigencies of their poetical code, to refer to them, not as a man and a woman, but as "hearts." This has sometimes a ludicrous effect:

"Upon the banks of Bosphorus, at eve, and dawn of day,
Two hearts, who lov'd with tenderness, were heard to trill this lay."[2]

This symbolical use of the word "heart" is a constant and wearying feature of the early nineteenth

[1] "The Siege of Rochelle" (Fitzball).
[2] "The Enchantress" (Bunn and M. de St. Georges).

century lyrics. Even Richard Cœur de Lion and Berengaria[1] (who, we have reason to believe, were not sentimentalists) are unable to say outright plain "I" and "me." The latter historical personage, for instance, says that her "fond suffering heart" wishes to retire to a cave in Palestine for peace!

In this Operatic period there are, I need not say, other equally lifeless types besides those of the hero and heroine. The confidant who exists only to receive confidences, the aged and tottering father and mother, and especially the beetle-browed heavy villain are all stock features of these entertainments. The thundering rhodomontade of the last-named character contains many lines which would have delighted—perhaps sometimes did delight—the soul of Charles Lamb. An exquisite anthology might be culled from these heavily scented flowers-of-rhetoric, but their type is too familiar to call for more than passing mention. I cannot, however, resist the temptation of quoting a phrase which, I think, sums up in a single masterly couplet the whole Transpontine Drama. It is this:

> "Clara Montalban! Name revil'd!
> Assassin of De Valmour's child!"[2]

With the production of Barnett's "Mountain Sylph" in 1834 English Opera made a distinct step forward in the direction of naturalness and ease. The actual text[3] of this opera is above, though not greatly above, the average form of contemporary

[1] In Balfe's "Talisman." The whole of this "book" is worth reading if only as an example of the strange dummy characteristics which historical personages can be made to assume in (bad) Opera.

[2] "The Siege of Rochelle" (Fitzball).

[3] "By T. J. Thackeray, Esq."

theatrical literature. It is, however, not so much in the words as in the general material of the drama, and the happy (if somewhat superficial) charm of its musical treatment that we find a new and unexpected return to life. The characters are no longer mere pasteboard figures which—like the scimitars and turbans, the gilt crowns and drinking cups —could be drawn wholesale from the property-room. There is less talk about "the heart," and more heart in it. In fact, one feels that the composer, almost for the first time since the days of Purcell, really loved his characters, and that, therefore, drawing as he did from that central light of all art, he was able to suffuse them with a certain mild tenderness.

The English opera-books written in the last half of the nineteenth century are a complete contrast to those of the preceding period. A double reaction has set in. First we find a continually increasing contempt for the old theatrical trickery which had robbed the earlier stage of its vitality. This contempt, in itself a symptom of health, was, however, allowed to unduly dominate the whole drama. On looking at these operas we feel instinctively that their authors were as a rule amateurs, and amateurs with little sense of the theatre. The result is that it is extremely difficult to cite a single opera whose contents were sufficiently dramatic—one might almost say sufficiently theatrical—to make success possible. Where the older composer had been busy setting to music theatrical trash which had no relation to literature or to life, his younger, and more earnest, rival was wasting his time in a futile attempt to illustrate dramatic texts which (though often happy as mere literature) could not by the very terms of their existence be galvanized into theatrical life. These texts

frequently contained broad and clearly expressed views on life as seen through the spectacles of a comfortable literary Londoner. Their expression was sometimes admirable, not "too good" for the theatre, but of a kind different from that which the theatre requires. They were, however, all foredoomed to failure on the operatic stage where a single "Ha, ha!" aside (and in the right place) has more value than the finest string of poetical images and philosophical reflections (in the wrong place). Thus the ungrammatical Bunn and all his tribe are, in a way, avenged on their less practical, if more widely accomplished, successors.

It must not be supposed that, with the coming of the English Musical Renaissance, all forms of literary distortion and inversion disappeared at once from our opera-books. Even as late as 1883 the most successful critic of his day found it possible to put on paper such a phrase as:

> "To answer a question is a task
> Which greatly depends on who does ask."[1]

To make use of such commonplaces as "lily white hand"[1] and "speaking in sorrow and not in anger,"[1] and to write such curiously belated blank-verse as this:

> "Even as we learn
> The latent root and sap of yonder tree
> By breaking one of its impending branches."[2]

But these lapses are not typical of the period, and we have only to read the complete texts of, say, "Colomba," "The Troubadour," "Pauline," "The Veiled Prophet," and "The Beauty-Stone," side by side with any texts we may choose by George Cole-

[1] "Colomba," by Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Francis Hueffer.
[2] "The Troubadour," by the same authors.

man the younger, Planché, Fitzball, or Bunn, to see the gulf which lies between them.

Before closing this chapter I may perhaps be allowed to make passing reference to a special disease which has afflicted our opera-books during the past thirty years. This disease, which is rather a source of discomfort than of actual danger, may be called Wardour-Streetism, and its cause is a sort of mental diffidence and cowardice on the part of the dramatist. The attitude of the earlier dramatist was quite different. He wrote his plays frankly in the paint- and property-rooms without any consciousness of the real life outside. The thing was bad, but he believed in it, and because of his belief he was able to build up on his own unnatural premises an emotional structure—unreal, it is true—but yet possessing a certain vivacity and a large measure of theatrical earnestness. Now when, in more recent years, the dramatist was required to furnish plays suitable for music, he found himself in a predicament. His consciousness of the real world outside the theatre forbade any resort to the old stage hocus-pocus, while the poverty of his artistic culture gave him no means of reconciling this consciousness to the necessary theatrical conventions. His topics were all of a day not his own, and therefore, being unable to force his own emotional experiences within the four walls of the theatre, he substituted, for the underlying humanity common to all ages, a poor and inaccurate version of their superficial differences.

In a word, he took refuge in the fake-antique trade which is supposed to flourish in Wardour Street.[1]

[1] It is curious to notice how this dialect pervades the whole domain of Opera. Even shrewd critics insensibly drop into "'tis," "'twill be," and "fain," when describing opera plots.

A melancholy jargon was invented, a jargon compounded of sixteenth and seventeenth century colloquialisms, artificialities of the eighteenth century, and odd scraps from our ballad and song literature.[1] This sham dialect did duty, even now does duty, as *the* language of English Opera. There are, however, signs that its reign is coming to an end. Audiences are growing impatient with its mannerisms, and are beginning to recognize that opera-books can only be written on historical subjects in one of two ways. Authors must either use only words and expressions of the historical period with which they are dealing, or they must write in the language of their own times. The former method is, of course, generally impossible for many reasons, one of which is that any English of an earlier date than about 1550 is practically unintelligible to a modern audience. If we adopt the latter method we are merely following the example of Shakespeare, and we must remember that we are not forced by it to employ only the transient and colloquial forms of our every-day speech. There is nothing to prevent authors exercising the utmost care in the selection of words, and the composite character of the English language gives them a wide field for this selection.

With this aspect of the question I shall deal more fully in a later chapter, but, before concluding, I may draw attention to a point about which very little is said by those musicians who discuss the relationship

[1] Even so charming a work as "The Canterbury Pilgrims" suffers from this defect. In many of the scenes (such as that between Hal o' the Chepe's hirelings and Sir Christopher) the composer, Sir Charles Stanford, shows a Purcellian facility in word-painting, but the brightness and ease of the music is often marred by the artificiality of the text.

between composer and dramatist—I mean their artistic equality. It is generally assumed that, because a great many men of low intelligence have written opera-books, therefore their art is on a lower level than that of the musician. But, though we may (unfortunately) draw deductions from operatic history favourable to this view, there is nothing in the nature of their work to prove it. Indeed, the task of constructing a fine tragedy or comedy with the added restrictions of language and the added limitations of movement which are imposed by the operatic form, must be difficult even to the most able and earnest-minded. Neither the music nor the text of an opera is the opera. The two things are, like the two halves of a pair of scissors, each useless without the other. The two artists, therefore—if there be two—concerned in its creation share the responsibility and should therefore share the dignity. It is only by a recognition of this fact that we shall ever put an end to the waste of composers' labours on bad opera-books. When we have done that and have placed the dramatist and the musician on their proper level of artistic—and, be it said, *commercial*—equality, we shall find an improvement in the quality of our operatic texts. The dramatist will then recognize that the mere "succession of events" is no longer sufficient for operatic success. It will then be worth his while to study the integral differences between operatic and other forms of dramatic construction, to admit the necessities in Opera of extended and developed "situations," and to fill these "situations," not with padding, but with poetry. He will not then grudge the infinite pains which must be spent both in the invention of his declamatory sentences and in the elaboration of those intimate alliances between intellectual and emotional

thought—the pivotal word-and-music-phrases of Opera. To do this is no easy task, and it demands a many-sided mind for its accomplishment. The dramatist must also be something of a musician and a good deal of a singer. Above all, he must have the heart and imagination of a poet.

CHAPTER VII

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND OPERATIC SINGING

In the first chapter of his *Studies and Memories* Sir Charles Stanford remarks that

> "No language is more perfect in its way for musical expression than that of the English Bible."

He then points out that a language which "has proved itself unapproached in English Oratorio cannot be quite devoid of capabilities for the stage." With these words I think no unprejudiced person can disagree. Indeed, I would go farther and remove the qualification "in its way," because the special "way" of the English language is one that differentiates it from other languages, and, at the same time, makes it better adapted than they for dramatic expression. As a medium for the precise statement of fact, or for the intricate and subtle distinctions of philosophy, it gives place respectively to French and German. To the ear it has neither the strength and glitter of Spanish nor the vowelled sweetness of Italian; but, as the language of the passions—that is to say, as the utterance of drama—it is in force, vivacity, charm, and in its mingling of lightness and dignity, unsurpassable. The tongue in which

"A Midsummer-Night's Dream," "Othello," and "Lycidas" were written must be a tongue of infinite variety and power. Nor is there any other speech which man has found equally satisfactory for the expression of exquisite fancy, tragic intensity, and the quiet solemnity of deep personal feeling.

Now if, instead of discussing the academic question of the suitability of the language for music-drama, we take an intelligent English opera-goer, and ask him whether he likes to listen to English in the theatre, we shall—nine times out of ten—be answered by an emphatic "No." It will help us to swallow our indignation at this reply if we remember two points. First, the playgoer visits the opera-house solely for what we may call selfish reasons. He wishes to get the greatest possible amount of personal enjoyment out of it, and there his interest ends. As a rule, he is unwilling to enter even into an academic discussion on the merits of the question which is before us, and he invariably refuses to take any part in a national propaganda, however praiseworthy its object. Furthermore, he generally takes to himself, not blame but credit for the acceptance of our national inferiority in Opera, and he is the more willing to make this concession as his whole life is organized on the precisely opposite hypothesis of our national superiority in every other sphere of human activity. The second point which we must bear in mind is, that if we press him for his reasons, we are pretty sure to find that he confuses two distinct questions:

(1) The advisability of translating purely foreign works for use before an English audience;

(2) The possibility of evolving a system of dramatic song-speech in English.

The first of these questions involves some discussion of the essential characteristics of modern Opera, that is to say, of the alliance between word- and music-phrases, to which I shall allude more fully when I come to deal with the subject of "translations." Of the second I would say—in some justification of the playgoer's "No"—that, however possible the evolution of such a system may be in the future, it has not been evolved yet. The language is there and the music is there, but the two things have not been brought together—at any rate they have not been brought together so as to fulfil their prime object in the theatre—intelligibility. I say this with confidence, because I have made continual enquiry and experiment to ascertain exactly what proportion of an opera text can actually be understood under the present conditions of performance. For this purpose my seat has been varied from the stalls to the gallery, and I have always made a special point of attending first-nights unprimed, when possible, with any preliminary knowledge of the plot. My general conclusion is that, though there are one or two singers (but not more) who are fairly articulate and intelligible in the theatre, with the rest one is lucky if one can catch a single word in half a dozen sentences. In short, their intelligibility is about one per cent.

I may cite an average experience. At one of Mr. Beecham's first-nights in 1910, "W" (one of the principals) was partially intelligible throughout: of "X" I could only gather, during the whole evening, the first three words of a catch-phrase, which was repeated several times. The plot, as I afterwards learnt, really turned on the psychology of "Y" and "Z." Of the former's lines I only

caught, in an orchestral pause, one phrase, something to this effect, "I will tell you how it happened," then came a long, long narrative, which, for all I knew, might have been in Chinese. Of "Z's" part I can honestly say that I understood no syllable from the first act to the last. At this particular first-night I was in the front of the amphitheatre at Covent Garden. At His Majesty's Theatre I heard a similar first performance from the dress-circle, and here my experience, as on many other occasions, was just the same—at most one or two singers whose words one could partially hear, and the rest a mere "fog-in-the-throat." In the choruses, where the utmost vivacity is attainable by the simultaneous utterance of a simple syllable, nothing was ever distinguishable. The consonantal attack was continually weak and hesitating, the colour of the vowel-sound so varied and grotesquely inaccurate as to be misleading, and the final consonants either half inaudible (and therefore ineffective) or else pronounced without unanimity by different singers in different parts of the bar.

Now, the ordinary opera-goer "on pleasure bent" may not know enough about French, German, or Italian to be able to say whether they are being sung properly or not, but his knowledge of his own language teaches him that there is something radically wrong when that language is unintelligible. He obtains a certain amount of sensuous pleasure from hearing fine vocalists singing, say, in Italian; and therefore he says outright that he prefers that language to English for operatic purposes. We can scarcely blame him for this, and, as he is no propagandist, we need not be surprised if he merely shrugs his shoulders when we point out that his

preference of Italian to English is really a preference of Italian words finely chosen and finely sung to English words ill chosen and ill sung—a preference which we all share.

Now, I do not need to labour the point that Opera is a mixed form of art. It relies for its complete intelligibility not only on the emotional appeal of its central scenes, but also on the intellectual perception of those circumstantial and explanatory "connecting-links" which justify the existence of the emotional scenes.[1] The attitude, then, of our hypothetical opera-goer, who is forced by the badness of English texts and English singers into a preference for Italian, is wrong, because it robs him of a large portion of the pleasure which he might otherwise obtain. In the first place, he loses all those delicious alliances of word-thought and music-thought which are found in every fine work of art, and which he himself fully appreciates when they are presented to him in such light and unemotional forms as the "Gilbert and Sullivan" operas. In the second place, he only acquires a knowledge of the actual drama either by reading or by a tiresome attention to the stage gestures.

[1] Wagner's well-known words that "Music should begin where words end" really sum up the psychology of Opera. It might be matter of interesting speculation what form, if any, Opera will take in England. The prejudices of the Anglo-Saxon races have always been so strongly in favour of the emotional scenes and so strongly opposed to the musical illustration of the intellectual "connecting-links," that they would probably be satisfied only with an operatic form in which the former predominated, and the latter either disappeared altogether or (more probably) were expressed melodically, but at a lower level of melodic organization than that of the central situations. An opera of this type seems to me to be both conceivable and rational, and it is practically only a return to Purcell's method.

And the more he persists in this attitude the more hard-set and wrong-headed he becomes in his convictions, for, after a few years of Covent Garden, he always comes to regard an opera as a sort of glorified symphony with vocal embellishments, in which his pleasure is continually discounted by the irritating intrusion of "stage-pantomime."[1]

I must confess that the refusal of such a man to attend English operatic performances under their present conditions is not unnatural. On the one hand he has the pleasure of hearing French and Italian artists whose training has been based on a close analysis of their own linguistic sounds and of the special adaptability of these sounds to music. In both these languages, be it said, the singer has to face grave difficulties before he can become wholly intelligible in the theatre; but these difficulties (to which I will allude later) are faced and overcome by every artist worthy of the name. The result is an accuracy and precision of vowel-colour and a consonantal neatness and finish which never leave the audience in doubt as to the actual word which is being spoken. On the other hand, he has the pain of listening to English singers whose training has been based on a useless, and often slovenly, examination, not of English, but of Italian or even French. The English-speaking singer, unlike his French or Italian rival, starts unhandicapped by any declamatory disadvantages. He should be the first declamatory artist in Europe. As a matter of fact, long before he ends his student days he has been taught to

[1] I have actually heard an Englishman of wide general culture and discernment (and a great lover of music) declare seriously that "if he understood every language in the world but one, he would like to hear his Opera in that one."

convert all his vowels into an unrecognizable smudge and to avoid his consonants as he would the devil.

Now, on the rare occasions when a singer from any of our musical seminaries ventures on to the comic opera (or, as it is now called, "The Musical Comedy") stage, the first lesson that he receives is that it is necessary for him *to be understood* by the people on the other side of the footlights. He finds out that no personal or social weight will maintain him in his position there if he persists in regarding the English language as a low-class dialect whose methods should be "elevated" to those of the Italian wherever possible. He becomes aware of the fact that many English words end in consonants, and that (if he is both to sing and to live) he must pronounce them audibly in order to distinguish, say, between "food" and "fool." He also, in some cases, becomes aware of a second fact, that the English language is more varied in subtle vowel-combinations than any other language of which he is ever likely to hear, and that therefore (if he is to please and not to irritate his audience) he must, when he wishes to say the word "ten," actually say the word "ten" and not "tan" or "ta'." Finally he learns that a good many years ago a system of speech-in-song, or song-speech, was elaborated and adapted to the needs of the comic opera stage at the Savoy Theatre: that this charming intimacy of words and melody, based as it was on a purely English foundation, was at once received with delight and appreciation, and that it still persists as a recognized factor in the success of every light opera.[1]

[1] Gilbert and Sullivan "transformed the style of speech on the musical stage, assimilating it to that of the non-musical theatres" ("Comic Opera" in Grove's *Dictionary*, ed. 2, vol.

The question, however, remains—if this has been done for comic opera and is being done for musical comedy, why has it not been done for serious opera?

The answer to this is that it has been done for serious opera in every country where Opera has been developed in harmony with national ideals. Indeed, without this close association of words with music Opera cannot exist except in the state in which it exists here as an unpleasant foreign hireling. But that is no reason why, if the opportunity were given, the same condition should not produce a similar result in this country, and the desired development has, as I have just pointed out, occurred here in the case of comic opera. This is the more interesting to us because, if we examine the matter without bias, we shall be forced to admit that the pleasure which we derive from any one of the gay or plaintive little songs of the Savoy opera is precisely the same psychologically as that which we obtain from the union of the words

"Mir erkoren
Mir verloren,"

i.). This is true in as far as Gilbert substituted clear and plain English for the make-believe stage dialect which existed before his day, but musicians owe a lasting debt to Sir Arthur Sullivan for his recognition of the fact that it was not only necessary to set his text to music which was pleasing in itself, but to invent melodies in such close alliance with the words that the two things became (to the hearer) indistinguishable. In this respect Sullivan did more for the English stage than any musician of his time, and his services are not at all on a par with those of such a merely glittering trifler as Offenbach. It is true that Sullivan was nicknamed "The English Offenbach," but that nickname was no more than a piece of personal malice and ignorance. The two men cannot really be compared, but, if one were compelled to attempt a comparison, one might say that (in their way) both Sullivan and Offenbach were diamonds, but that the latter was of the kind known in Regent Street as a "Parisian Diamond."

with the rising semitones in "Tristan and Isolde." In each case it is the heightening of the speech and the unerring symbolism of the words by the music that satisfy us. The two things expressed are, of course, miles apart. One is either transitory and unimportant in its nature or a transitory aspect of a really important thing, while the other is a topic whose interest and importance are as lasting as the human race. In this mutual interaction of word-phrase and music-phrase lies the whole problem of operatic composition, and the history of its growth is the history of Opera—especially of German Opera.

It may be well, then, in a country where national Opera has no present existence, to study the whole question a little more closely in order that we may arrive at an idea of its conditions and necessities.

The question is, how are we to develop a true national school of declamation or song-speech, and the two groups of persons most interested in this question are the composers and the singers. I need not point out that it is the latter who are always unjustly blamed for our present lamentable state of inferiority. It would, however, be just as fair to blame an unsharpened sword or a misdirected bullet for its failure. The composer and not the singer is primarily responsible, and I wish to say with all the strength of which I am capable that no school of declamatory or intelligible singing has ever been founded or ever can be founded except by the exertions of the composer. He precedes the singer as surely as day precedes night, and it is not until he has provided the necessary material on which the singer can work that the production of a satisfactory school of dramatic singing becomes possible. The history of the great Italian, French, and German opera singers and even

the sounds of their voices (if they could have been preserved to us) would tell us nothing of importance, while the history of such men as Gluck, Verdi, Weber, and Wagner tells us everything.

Hence it is that, in this country, behind all the more superficial questions of vocal technique, lies the one vital question of the composer's opportunity; for until he has the possibility of exercising his art before the public, he can bring no pressure to bear upon the singer. He may demand reform and even know how to secure it, but the singer remains in unconscious ignorance of his own shortcomings—a sword, perhaps of the finest steel, but unsharpened and useless. The only man who can sharpen it is the swordsman himself—in this case the composer—and at present he is compelled to leave it rusting in its sheath. I wish, therefore, to make it particularly clear that, whatever I may have to say with regard to the training (and the mistraining) of English singers, the question is only a "proximate" one, and that the problem of producing a school of intelligible dramatic singing is not, primarily, a singer's question at all. When once the English composer is granted the opportunity in England which is denied to none of his colleagues abroad, his demand will create a supply of adequate vocalists. This supply will, of course, not be brought about by the wave of a fairy's wand; the composer will have to do the teaching and the unteaching; but there is no difficulty in that; it has occurred in the history of every operatic movement on the Continent and it is not at all likely that history will be contradicted here.

The dramatic singers of the present day are, as I have said, often blamed for their shortcomings.

We must, however, plead in their defence that, as there is a very restricted market for their talents in English Opera, many of them are compelled to gather their experience abroad, and even to study their technique in a foreign language in order to sing to English people. Nothing could be more disastrous. Every time such a singer vocalizes a foreign vowel or forms correctly a foreign consonant with his lips, tongue, teeth, and palate, he is accustoming his muscles to acquire a method of utterance which is, from the English point of view, incorrect. The more, therefore, he sings abroad the greater becomes his difficulty in singing at home.

Even if he is trained in his own country, his training will probably be by the "old Italian method" —"as advertized"; but it does not really matter whether it is by the "old" or the "new" Italian method —or, if it comes to that, by the Dutch, Hindu, or Chinese—because such a language as Italian differs in every essential particular (in genealogy, in sound, in structure, in rhythm, in accent, in pitch, in length and quality of vowel, and in consonantal attack) from English, and therefore any singing method based on the one cannot, by its very nature, be of service in the other. When such a method is transplanted from Italy to England by the ignorant vanity of voice-producers—and this is generally made possible by the humble-minded diffidence of the English public in all artistic matters—the result is a crop of singers who really are better entitled than their masters to the name of "voice-producers," for all they do is to "produce the voice" in a hermaphroditic language that would disgust a monkey. There *is* an "old Italian method," which is also a "new Italian method," and that method is for Italian singing-

masters to study the sounds of the Italian language and teach them to Italians for use in Italian Opera; and the only lesson which we can learn from the Italian success in this walk of art is that we must follow, not the details of their practice in circumstances which differ widely from ours, but their rigid principles; and these principles are, when applied to this country, the study of the sounds of the English language by English singing-masters and the teaching of these sounds to Englishmen for use in English Opera.[1]

In order to see how inapplicable are Italian methods and Italian standards to the training of English vocalists we must glance for a moment at the chief differences between the two languages.

(1) Italian is in its stock comparatively a "pure" tongue. It springs from the language—Latin—which was spoken in the Italian peninsula both before and after the time of Christ. Its words differ from those of Latin mainly in that they have modified the elaborate system of suffixes which, in that tongue, fix the relationships of words with one another in a sentence. In addition to that, there has been a general detrition, or rubbing-down, of all angular consonantal sounds, and, where this has been impossible, new and easily spoken words (which had probably been in vulgar use even in classical times) have often thrust themselves up above the surface, where they now appear as a recognized part of the

[1] As an example of cosmopolitan wrong-headedness the following quotation deserves study: "Wherever singing has been cultivated well, it has been cultivated on Italian principles. With a regard for truth rather than for the *amour propre* of other nations, we can take the best Italian singing as the standard norm" (*The Opera, Past and Present*, by W. F. Apthorp).

vocabulary.[1] The admixture of purely foreign (non-Latin) words is, relative to that in our language, small. With the exception of a few colloquialisms, practically every word in Italian now ends in a vowel. The actual vowels in the language are few, simple and extremely pure in quality, while the consonants appear as single consonants between vowels, or, at most, as combinations of easily pronounced consonants. The characteristic of the language is the constant recurrence of pure, broad vowel-sounds separated from each other by simple consonants. The *length* of the vowels is not fixed, but is generally midway between our shortest and longest. Their *force*, on the other hand, is fixed, and it is from this force that the rhythms of Italian poetry are derived.

(2) English is a "composite" language. The stock is mainly Anglo-Saxon, but there has been a large admixture of other elements. The names of many places and of some common objects are Celtic. It also has taken a fair number of words from Danish before the Norman Conquest. A few Latin words have come into it straight from Rome, while a very large number have come by way of Italy and (especially) France. These are the chief sources from which it draws its vocabulary. Its words generally end either in a consonant or in a "surd," sometimes in a "voice-glide." Its grammar is simpler than that of any other European language in that it has, wherever possible, dropped all grammatical differences in the structure of its words and adopted a simple and "generalized" system in which the relationships between words are to be recognized *only* by their position in a sentence. The big Italian

[1] An exactly similar process has taken place in modern (Romaic) Greek.

vowel-sounds occur less frequently in English, but they occur principally in words that express strong ideas, and which therefore demand a large utterance. But, besides these "big vowels," the language possesses a subtly graded system of vowel combinations quite different from those of any Romance language. The total number of these vowel-sounds (pure and impure) is 61, of which 9 are used only in foreign, semi-foreign, and Early English words. Besides these 61 sounds there are the "voice-glide," as used in the words "able" and "eaten," and 2 doubtful diphthongs.[1] Its consonants are 23 in number, of which 7 are used only in foreign, semi-foreign, and Early English words. In the structure of its words it differs widely from Italian; for, not only is almost every consonantal combination possible, but—as these consonants occur not only in the middle, but at each end of its words—these beginnings and endings are liable to be brought unpleasantly close together in a sentence.[2] The tendency, in common speech, is to rub out these awkward combinations, but, if this is done in song, the words become unintelligible. The process of "rubbing-out" the difficult consonants has not gone so far in England as in Italy. The Englishman may have ceased to pronounce the "gh" in "thought" as he did in

[1] (1) The imperfect diphthong heard in the word "fate," and (2) the "non-recognized vowel-element" which is developed before the two forms of "R." These two forms of "R" are the sounds heard in "heR" and "Ran" respectively, and the "vowel-element" which is developed before them may be heard in such words as "pier," "pare," "pore," "poor," and "weary." (These details are taken from the Preface to Murray's *Dictionary*.)

[2] As an example the reader may say the two words "most strange," not as they are generally pronounced "mo' strange," but distinctly, thus, "mo-*ststr*-ange."

Shakespeare's day, but he is still able to say "employ" where the Italian substitutes "impiegare." Speaking generally we may say that there is a strong tendency in English to obscure all the weak syllables and to group all the elements of a sentence according to what I may call the "Drama" of the sentence, that is to say, round its central idea, which thus acquires an intensity expressed to the ear by the "length," "pitch," and "force" of a syllable or a group of syllables. To this point, which is of the greatest importance in the question of declamation, I shall allude later.

Let us now see what the objects of the singing-master should be and what they actually are. His main object should be, as I have said, the elaboration of an *English* singing technique founded on the study of the English language as it exists at the present day. This needs no demonstration or proof beyond the fact that the object of the pupil's study is that he should be able to sing intelligibly in English to English people. The technique must give his pupils the power of producing, in all musical circumstances, vocal tone accurately coloured with the existing vowel-sounds of the English language. It must, furthermore, give him the power of so pronouncing the consonants that these sounds become intelligible to the audience as words.

Now, the singing-master usually approaches his task from a precisely opposite standpoint. His object is solely the production of sensuous beauty, and this he achieves at the (heavy) expense of dramatic truth.[1] He degrades the voice from what

[1] "Thus characterization, dramatic effect, variety of tonal and emotional colouring are all bartered away for sensuous beauty of tone" (H. T. Finck, *Wagner and his Works*).

should be its distinguishing position of superiority to the level of any other instrument, such as the clarinet or violin. All the inherent force and the gathered vitality which have come to the language in its long centuries of evolution are ignored, and the "Word"—which has been happily christened "The Sword of Man's Spirit"—becomes as unrecognizable as a lump of clay. In order to attain this lamentable ideal the singing-master first of all "blacklists" the endless vowel-combinations of the language as unfortunate lapses, on the part of the English people, from the way of truth and virtue,—lapses to which he considers it polite to quietly close his eyes. His method is to bastardize his own speech by the substitution (for these vowel-combinations) either of the Italian vowel-system pure and simple, or of a ridiculous foggy vowel-system that exists nowhere on earth outside the singing-studios of the West-End. In fact, he exercises his pupils, either half-heartedly or whole-heartedly, as if they were going to sing Italian, not English, and his invariable method is to train them on a very few, sometimes on only one, of the big Italian vowel-sounds.

Naturally pupils who have received this sort of training are quite incapable of singing in their own tongue. Indeed, they are not capable of doing anything much except singing slow "vocalises" on some such syllable as "ā." Very few of them can be made to undertake the serious analytical study of sound without which they cannot possibly give the correct colour and meaning to their words. They do not see that, if our language is poorer than Italian in the big vowel-sounds, it is therefore the more necessary that they should study its intricacies and obscurities. The substitution of incorrect for

correct vowel-sound has been part of their curriculum, and this has the natural effect on their minds that they come to regard the production of beautiful tone as a thing quite opposed to accuracy of articulation and pronunciation; and the worst of it is that, when one does draw their attention to the fact that the English word "hand," for instance, is not pronounced "hahnd" any more than it is pronounced "hoond" or "hind" or "heend," they are quite satisfied to fortify themselves behind the magisterial answer that they regard "hahnd" as a better and more singable word than "hand."[1]

In a word, the singing-master, having made the false postulate that the sole object of his art is the production of the most pleasing sounds, is compelled to justify it in practice; and this he does with a perversity which is as painstaking as it is ingenious.

The consequence is that, when his pupils begin to appear in public, they too are often quite unconscious of the fact that their art exists, not for the production of detached emotional sounds, but for the purpose of heightening the effect of the words. Many of them exhibit what are called "beautiful voices," that is to say, "beautiful" in exactly the sense in which we say the call of the Australian "mynah-bird" is beautiful. They stand up at concerts and utter limpid sounds, all of one colour, in any and every part of their compass. Meanwhile the audience sits down and endeavours (by poring over concert-books)

[1] Ducrow, the equestrian performer (we are told), used to make a highly effective entrance into the ring at Astley's, where in reply to the question, "And who art thou?" he was accustomed to growl, in sepulchral tones "Thahnahnamy." Entrances of this sort into "The Ring" have not been unknown even in our own day.

to ascertain what they are talking about. By the time the song is ended all opportunity for pleasure is gone, and the audience—now that it has mastered the translation, and put itself on equal terms, so to speak, with the singer—asserts its British love of fair-play by demanding an encore,—an unhappy experiment which is bound to fall flat, as *this time* it has no intellectual employment to fall back on during the warbling.

In the theatre it is not possible to encore a declamatory phrase so that one may hear what it sounds like when one knows its meaning, and it is an everyday occurrence for a prima donna to "hang on by the eye-lids" to some indeterminate vowel sound while the audience listens with a sort of agonized suspense in the hope that it may obtain some clue to her meaning from the final consonant. If it comes the audience is, of course, at liberty to associate it with any one of 50 possible vowel-sounds, and it therefore opens up a wide field for instantaneous speculation. But more probably it does not come, for the singing-master, besides tampering with the vowels, is always advising his pupils to weaken and destroy such letters as "R," "G," "GH," and "S"—to eliminate, in short, what are called the "buzzings and hissings." These he regards, not as a means of intelligibility, but as the natural enemies of the correct voice-producer.

> "The Singer must be very careful to shorten the S as much as possible."
>
> "It must indeed be heard, but it must be very unobtrusive."[1]

[1] *Pronunciation for Singers* (Ellis).

But what does this mean? The simple point is that the consonant must be so heard that it conveys its sense to the audience: and if it is to be so heard, it must be pronounced distinctly; and this, in a large theatre, involves its strengthening, not its weakening. To the singer the consonants may appear to be over-obtrusive, but he must, like the instrumentalist, the preacher, and the public speaker, adjust his method to his surroundings. Even such advice as that

> "The Singer's business is to make the most of the musical characters of his vowels and cut the buzzes and hisses down to the shortest intelligible duration"[1]

can only be called good if we emphasize the word "intelligible," for it is precisely in the (unvocal) consonantal separations, including the "buzzes and hisses," that the intelligibility of the words resides. The reader has only to remove the consonants and the vowels in turn from a line and then attempt to read both versions either with the ear or with the eye; there can be no doubt as to which group of letters he will rely on for the meaning of the sentence. As an example:

"-o-o--o- -o --e-- -oo— a-- -a--u-e- -e-."
"T-m-rr-w t- fr-sh w--ds -nd p-st-r-s n-w."

It must not be supposed that I have laid stress on this point—the necessity of accurate vowel-colour and consonantal distinction—as a mere unattainable "counsel of perfection." It is attainable by intelligent practice, provided the singer devotes that practice to the English language and accepts it for

[1] *Ibid.*

what it is, not what it might be. Indeed, it is not only attainable but attained by some few singers. These are mostly men, though it is a curious fact that the only English artist who, in my experience, is completely intelligible from all parts of the theatre is a lady. We must remember, too, in favour of our singing-masters and our vocalists, that they have been terribly handicapped in the past by the slovenliness of our composers, and that a great part of their method is really directed towards overcoming difficulties which they should never be asked to overcome. One continually meets with complaints that singers must be prepared to sing long, heavy syllables to short notes, and short, light syllables to long notes.[1] It is, of course, monstrous that singing-masters should be set the task of inventing a method to cope with these perversions of language, but it is unfortunately true that they are compelled to do this by the ignorance of English composers. It would be easy to fill a hundred pages of print with evidences of this ignorance, and, even among the most brilliant of our younger musicians, their insensibility to the rhythm of the language seems to be so marked as to be almost a conscious affectation.

For this there is no excuse. The English composer has a language which, both in the variety of its vowel-sounds and in the dramatic groupings of its rhythms is a far more tractable instrument of musical thought than either French or Italian. In-

[1] For instance, in Ellis's *Speech and Song*. The author of this work says very justly (in his *Pronunciation for Singers*): "It is a great misfortune that both authors and composers in general treat and have apparently always treated language as a vehicle of music with such little regard to its natural laws, as to lay themselves open to the imputation of ignorance."

deed, in both these points the English language may be said to be "ready-made" for declamatory and melodic treatment.

In the first place, it has a much wider range of vowel-colour than either of the two languages which I have named. Its vowel-combinations are more varied, more subtle, more delicate, and every one of these subtleties is (or should be) an instrument of greater intelligibility in the hands of the musician. If he needs vocal beauty or emphasis he has plenty of broad, weighty words, both Anglo-Saxon and Romance. Many of these never figure in opera-books at all, partly from a mistaken idea that poetry is opposed to naturalness, and partly because, in the past, English melodic forms have tamely followed the curves of music-phrases which had been specially designed to amplify the word-phrases of foreign languages. Outside this class of word he has a delicious and practically endless series, whose characteristic is the nimbleness which comes from the alternation of a light vowel with an easily spoken consonant. The language is largely made up of such words, and the consequent rapidity of utterance —which foreigners regard as a striking feature of our spoken tongue—should also be an essential part of our musical declamation.

I need scarcely mention how much the composite nature of our tongue widens the composer's field of choice as between vowel and vowel. The word "big" may occur to him, and immediately such other words as "great," "grand," "large," "gross," "huge"—each with a different vowel-colour and a subtle difference of meaning—spring into his mind. He may even find synonyms (such as "return" for "come back" or "go back") where the difference of

meaning is almost imperceptible; and in that case his choice is to be made solely by ear and by the requirements of his vocal phrase.

But that is not all; for, when he has selected the most appropriate word for his use, he will find that, in general, its long vowels are longer and its short vowels are shorter than the similar vowels in such a language as Italian. Consequently, when these vowels undergo further artificial lengthening or shortening in music, the resultant word-and-music phrase comes with a greater ease and naturalness than is possible in any other language. Every sung-phrase thus treated by the composer has on its face the hall-mark which characterizes it as a higher development of a spoken-phrase. Again, the accentuation of individual words in English is fixed and rigid, and this accentuation is, of course, the common property of an English audience. An English composer, therefore, if he wishes to be understood, has merely to transfer his own speech into musical notation. In some other languages both the composer and his audience are faced by fundamental difficulties on this point. In French especially there is no system at all of syllabic force or stress. The accent is purely an artificial creation on the part of the composer. A French dissyllable—which an Englishman would probably pronounce as a strong vowel followed by a weak—may be set by a French composer to a "down-beat" followed by an "up," while in the very next musical phrase he may (and often does) set the same word in a precisely opposite manner. From this arise: (first) great difference of opinion and practice on the part of various composers; (second) an unnatural type of vocal phrase; and (third) a degree of consonantal distinction and of

vowel accuracy on the part of the singer without which he could not possibly be understood even by his own countrymen.

For dramatic expression, however, the chief advantage of the English language does not lie in its fixed system of accents or in its variety of vowel- and consonant-combinations, but in the rhythm of its sentences. The reader must remember that the division of language into syllables and words is only an artificial and comparatively modern invention. In actual speech these words exist vitally to our intelligence as Groups, and these word-groups are arranged round some central syllable or syllables, which are to the complete sentence what the "high-light" is to a picture, Furthermore, the method by which this "high-light" is obtained is the same in speech and in song—by a difference of either (1) "length," (2) "pitch," (3) "force," or by a combination of two or more of these differences. Now, it is just in this very fact, the existence of word-groupings round a central idea, that our language shows a natural superiority to any other for dramatic purposes; for it has a much stronger tendency than any other to force these central syllables into prominence, and to obscure the (less-important) surrounding syllables.[1] This feature, which often procures it a bad name on the Continent as a "hammering" language, is really an attempt to omit everything but the "drama" of the sentence, and so to force it

[1] This difference strikes one very plainly if one listens, a few yards off, to the conversation of a group of road labourers, say in Italy and England. In the former case the talk, however hot and excited it may be, always sounds to English ears like "prattle," while in the latter case a quiet conversation that is really totally devoid of emotion has a sort of dramatic earnestness, even solemnity —if one is far enough away not to catch the sense of the words.

more vividly on the hearer's attention.[1] It is, in fact, an endeavour to heighten the effect of speech by going outside its natural limits; in other words, to approximate speech to song. But this "heightening of effect" is, as I have pointed out, achieved by exactly the same means in both cases. The only distinction is that, in the case of speech, the possible limit of these differences is small, while in the case of song it is large.

Herein lies what should be the great strength of the English composer; for, if he will only discard the artificialities and inanities which he has too often regarded as "suitable for music," and choose instead English that is simple, nervous, and racy: and if he will then give his musical-phrase the same outline as his word-phrase, he will find his audience meeting him, as it were, half-way, and understanding his combined word-and-music phrase almost before it is uttered. The singer then only needs to pronounce the words correctly and his utterance becomes "song" in its true sense—"a higher development of speaking."[2] This method of expression, in which we have a completely natural spoken-phrase joined to and governing a completely natural musical-phrase, is

[1] Of course the "high-lights" of speech are made to differ, even in the same sentence, according to the precise shade of meaning which the speaker wishes to convey, and the subtle differences of grouping which accompany and illustrate the corresponding differences of idea are continually being added to and varied. It is striking to note both the rapidity with which these variations and additions are, when useful, incorporated into the language and the unanimity of method which is employed in forcing the "high-light" into prominence and throwing the unimportant syllables out of focus.

[2] *Voice, Song, and Speech*, by Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke.

the true "song-speech" of which Richard Wagner was the supreme master. The detail of his practice, whether on the musical or the verbal side, is by no means applicable to our circumstances; but from the broad technical reformation, by which he placed speech first in drama, we have everything to learn.

In order to apply his lessons the English composer needs to study the English language with the same care as that which Wagner gave to the study of the German language. He must recognize that, in English, as in all other languages, every word is not fitted for musical treatment. In France, Germany, and Italy there is a complete consciousness of this necessary specialization. The English composer must therefore adopt the same methods of close analysis if he is to make as happy a selection of words. It is not sufficient for him to "set" the first jumble of words that comes into his head, or into the head of the author who is supplying him with a text; and there is the less necessity for him to do so because his language almost always gives him the enviable choice of alternative phrases and the advantage of varying and complex rhythms, whose idea-associations are stereotyped, and therefore easily intelligible to his audience.

But this close attention to the refinements of language is only one portion of his art. He must also recognize that the two things—the word-phrase and the music-phrase—should be for his audience only one thing, and therefore he must exercise the same patience and care in the adjustment of the music to the speech. The result can and must be both vivid and beautiful, appealing with equal sincerity to the minds and the hearts of his hearers. This goal can be achieved only by the abandonment of foreign

standards and by the evolution of a new song-speech modelled to the requirements of our own language. When that is done, all the mere singing-master's difficulties, based as they are either on an attempt to "improve" the singing qualities of the English language, or to "fake" the careless craftsmanship of the English composer, will vanish, and we shall have the possibility of an art in England divided from that of France or Germany by the same gulf that divides Corneille and Schiller from Shakespeare.

The English composer need not imagine that he will find an obstacle in the stubbornness of his native tongue. He has, indeed, inherited a language more potent than any in the modern world: so infinite in its variety that it creeps, like molten gold, into every fold and crevice of thought. In its history it is like a river whose many head-waters flow through many countries till they join the main-stream. There each one blends with the others, but blends so as to give the river some new thread of colour, which, on its way to the sea, keeps within itself a remembrance of the soil over which it has passed.

Note.—The reader may perhaps care to see a couple of extracts from a quaint old defence of the English language. They were printed in 1644 and reprinted (in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. ii. page 33, London, 1744) under the title "Vindex Anglicus, or The perfection of the English language defended and asserted." The author, after pointing out the facility with which the language is learnt by foreigners, the copiousness of its vocabulary as compared with that of Latin or French, its variety, and the great opportunity which it offers for saying things either plainly, or by metaphor, or by implied metaphor, proceeds, "The *Italian* is so full of Vowels that he is cumbered with Elisions; the *Dutch* with Consonants, that his Verse is sick of the *Sciatica*; the *French* cannot afford you four Words whose Accents are in the *Antepenultima*, and therefore unfit for Dactyls, which the Accent and the Metre do naturally square with us, that in both we deservedly bear the Prize from all

the rest. The *Spanish* and the *Italian* want our *Cesura* in the midst of the Verses; the *Italian* cannot afford you a *masculine* Rhyme: nor the *French* make Metre of the *Antepenultima*, and yet there is not any of the three Syllables, whereunto our Ability extendeth not." Later on he speaks of Italian as "an excellent, princely, and pleasant Language upon which the best Judgments look with great Respect; yet it wants Sinews and passes as a silent Water. The *French* are truly delicate, but too affected and effeminate. The *Spanish* majestical, but terrible and boisterous. The *Dutch* manly, but very harsh. Now we, in borrowing from each of them, give the Strength of Consonants to the *Italian*, the full sound of *Syllables* to the *French*, the Variety of Termination with milder Accents to the *Spaniard*, and dissolve with more facility the *Dutch* Vowels; like Bees, gathering their Perfections, leave their Dross to themselves; So when Substance combineth with Delight, Plenty with Delicacy, Beauty with Majesty, and Expedition with Gravity what can want to the Perfection of such a Language?... The Mixture of our Extractions from others, joined with our own Monosyllables, make up such a perfect Harmony, that so you may frame your speech majestical, pleasant, delicate, or manly according to your Subject, and exactly represent, in ours, whatsoever graces any other Language carrieth."

CHAPTER VIII

OPERATIC TRANSLATION

In the beginning of the last chapter I pointed out that many persons, when discussing the topic of "English" in the opera-house, are apt to confuse two widely different questions: (1) Is it possible to evolve a system of dramatic song-speech in English? and (2) Is it advisable to translate foreign works for use before an English audience?

The latter question, to which the ordinary layman would probably answer "yes" offhand, is still matter of controversy among those few educated people who take any interest in the subject.

Whichever view we may take, we shall, I think, be forced to grant that translation is only a makeshift. It is, however, a makeshift which has been adopted on the Continent in every country which possesses a national Opera; and this adoption has been brought about by the cultured recognition of one fact—that art cannot exist and develop healthily unless it is both "accessible and intelligible"[1] to the people. Here this fact is still, as far as Opera is concerned, almost unrecognized.

The history of Opera in this country has, for many years past, been merely the history of a foreign culture

[1] Leo Tolstoi.

imported for the enjoyment of a leisured, wealthy, and artistically sterile class. It is, of course, impossible to say how far this class actually understands its season of "Grand" Opera. As a nation we are, I suppose, the worst linguists in the world,[1] but among the frequenters of Covent Garden there are a certain number of foreign cosmopolitans to whom differences of language are of no account. These people, who are "great supporters" of any art (except that of the country in which they are kind enough to live), probably understand the singers, and look on their spent guineas partly as a "little flutter" in personal enjoyment, and partly as "an expensive and not unprofitable way of demonstrating financial prosperity."[2]

But, though we have only to pay a visit to Covent Garden in "the season" to see that these people form a considerable part of the audience, they are not, I think, in the majority there. The greater part of the house is filled by what I may call "English specialists in foreign art." This class generally shows a genuine enthusiasm for foreign music and foreign artists, and, either by repeated visits to the theatre, or by the study of newspaper critiques and vocal scores, acquires a rough idea of the opera plots.

But modern Opera is not to be understood by any such means as this. As I have already shown, it is built up as an intimate alliance between word- and

[1] Perhaps easily explained by the violently exteriorizing tendencies of the English upper classes. This makes them the greatest travellers in the world, but also causes them to look, as it were, over and beyond Europe, of which Continent they merely select and Anglicize two or three congenial spots as playgrounds.

[2] J. A. Fuller-Maitland in his introduction to *The Opera*, by R. A. Streatfield.

music-phrases intensified emotionally by the orchestra. Every declamatory and nearly every melodic phrase plays an integral part in the building-up of the complete fabric, and, if the audience is unable to apprehend the form at the moment of hearing, the whole thing becomes either unintelligible or at most a thing of the study and not of the theatre. If, therefore, we are to expect an English audience to really understand an opera as its (French, German, or Italian) composer intended it to be understood, we must presume on its part a fairly comprehensive and accurate acquaintance with these three languages.

On this point it is not possible to give more than a personal opinion, but I do not think that I shall be misjudging a Covent Garden audience if I suggest that its knowledge of Italian is not brought *to* the theatre as an accomplishment necessary to the understanding of the opera, but carried away *from* it as a result of the "damnable iteration" of operatic commonplaces. Here and there, it is true, we may find an Englishman with enough Italian to get him through the (execrable) customs-house at Ventimiglia, but as a rule his Italian words have been picked up between the turnips and the tube station at Covent Garden, and they could be written, without crowding, on the back of an international postage coupon. Of French, and especially of Boulogne pier French, there is of course a greater knowledge—but even here the French that enables one to call a taxi at the Gare St. Lazare is not exactly sufficient for the comprehension of "Louise" or "Le Chemineau." Even smaller is the general knowledge of German, though we must remember that a great many of our musicians, and especially of our elder musicians, are, owing to their education, fluent speakers. On the

whole I think we may safely say that, however much the Englishman and the Englishwoman may enjoy the orchestral and vocal sounds in the opera-house, they do not understand the opera itself.[1]

It might, therefore, be thought that the very simple and logical necessity of understanding the opera would lead to an immediate demand, not only for adequate translations, but for their use in the theatre. This is, however, far from being the case. Many objections to this course are advanced, but, though we must concede their weight, it is possible on the whole to doubt their validity in face of the overwhelming necessity for "operatic intelligibility."

In summing up these objections we must, of course, put out of our minds all the merely material objections—the vested interests of unpatriotic financiers and aristocrats, the mutual support which foreign artists afford each other, their common anxiety to see the colour of English gold, and their iron determination to keep brother John and cousin Jonathan

[1] I have often made pointed, and sometimes uncomfortable, enquiries after foreign operatic performances in order to ascertain exactly how much or how little has been understood. The result has always been the same. With the exception of the few people who have actually lived abroad for a considerable time, practically nobody understands a single phrase of the song-speech as it is meant to be understood. During the entr'actes at a first-night the audience tries, in a series of whispered discussions, to come to some conclusion on points that would appear to be as integral to the understanding of the opera as are the relationships between the Montagues and the Capulets to the understanding of "Romeo and Juliet." In the stalls at Covent Garden I once heard two bejewelled ladies discussing the first act of "Rigoletto," which they had just heard, under the impression that it was "Carmen." It was evidently their first visit to this particular opera, and the bill had been changed.

outside the doors except on the contract terms that they accept foreign standards, foreign ideals, foreign languages, and foreign art. These are of no account, because if the public wished to understand Opera (and therefore determined to hear it in English) such material obstacles would vanish, and the public would get what it wanted. The fact, however, remains that the public does not so wish.

We must, therefore, before dealing with the matter on general lines, try to adjust our viewpoint to that of the average Opera-goer. We must endeavour to see the question, not with the eyes of the composer or the critic, but with the eyes of the man who has been long accustomed to hearing and enjoying Opera in a foreign tongue.

I need not discuss again the type of opera-goer to whom I have alluded in a previous chapter—the man who is always fatally conscious that Opera is a mixed form of art, who therefore demands it in any foreign language which he can *not* understand, and who would probably prefer it in the concert room with the dramatic parts neatly vocalized on the open Italian "ä." Fanatics of this type are fortunately rare, but akin to them is a second and very large class of opera-goers whose opposition to the use of the English language is no less determined. These are the people who, after repeated visits to the opera-house under the deplorable conditions which have now existed in London for so many years, at last arrive at a hard-bitten and ludicrously muddled state of mind, made up, in equal parts, of enthusiasm for the music and complete ignorance of the intellectual ideas which the music is endeavouring to illustrate.

To such people an accidental visit to one of their favourite operas when sung in English comes as a

shocking disillusionment. They have already created for themselves a fictitious Opera of a sentiment exalted beyond the reach of human understanding, when they are suddenly faced by some such horrible fact as that a few delicious soprano notes—which they have always associated with the infinite and the eternal—are nothing more than a request for a hair-comb.[1] They find, to their chagrin, that familiar emotional music-phrases were actually written for the purpose of intensifying emotional ideas; they also find, to their greater chagrin, that very often, in bad operas, highly emotional music-phrases are attached to quite *un*emotional ideas.

It must be allowed that, if one has been beguiled into shedding tears by the statement of some trivial or banal circumstance of everyday life, one needs some bold stroke by which to regain one's self-respect; and the bold stroke (in their case) generally takes the form of a curse on their own language. Such people as these are, at present, the very worst enemies of both "Opera in English" and "English Opera." They combine with a low degree of general education, first, a strong musical receptivity which they have acquired from the continual contemplation of foreign, that is to say at anyrate partially unnatural, art-works, and second, an innate idealism which is impervious to any argumentative challenge. It is difficult to see how this very large class of emotional purists can be moved from their obstructive opposition. They cannot be educated out of it, for the simple reason that they will not go to school. Even if they can be cajoled as far as the playground it is useless to attempt their education by means of translated works

[1] Last act of Verdi's "Otello." Many other instances might be cited.

with whose music they are already familiar, for the difficulties of translation are great, and the result, especially to the hard-shell idealist, unsatisfactory.[1]

Nor must we overlook the fact that, though from their experience they make an absolutely false deduction—namely, the unsuitability of English for Opera—yet they are influenced in making this deduction by an idealism and a hatred of operatic incongruity which is, both historically and as a matter of present-day fact, an integral part of the English character. Their unconscious endeavour is to recognize Opera as a purely musical statement of emotion. This, of course, it has never been, and is not at present. There is, however, something to be said on both sides from our national standpoint, and we need not jump to the hasty conclusion that this idealistic attitude, by its very nature, forbids any true appreciation of Opera as an art-form. Nor can we ignore the existence of this mental attitude except at our peril.

We should rather adopt the view that the Englishman's dissatisfaction with his own speech as a medium for music-drama is only a rational dissatisfaction with an art-form developed solely in harmony with foreign ideals. The revolt in his mind against this specially

[1] I should mention that these objections to the use of English in Opera are merely objections which I have actually heard raised by opera-goers—a very minute fraction of the community. On one or two occasions I have been able to observe the different effect of two operatic performances—one in Italian, the other in English—on an unbiassed person quite unacquainted with the conventions of the lyric stage. In every such case the Italian performance, despite its vocal and instrumental glories, merely puzzled the listener, while the English performance, handicapped by a poverty-stricken mise-en-scene and a ragged orchestra, aroused the same listener to enthusiasm.

developed form begins as soon as he has the opportunity of really understanding its contents by means of a performance in his own language. And this is a most hopeful sign, because it indicates on his part an acute consciousness of an artistic difference between himself and the foreigner. We must hope for the day when English composers will have the means of developing a school of National Opera free from references to those material and external things which so much disturb the English mind.

When these banalities have been cut down to their smallest dimensions we shall have a simple type of Opera conditioned only by some few, easily understood physical and psychological relationships. In no other way will the public consent to meet the composer half-way, and to acquire that gradual familiarity which alone can teach them the inherent beauties of emotional music joined to emotional English speech.

From this point of view the translator, labouring under difficult and unsatisfactory conditions, is rather a hindrance than a help. In the past his work has often been so bad that many opera-goers, whose discernment naturally guided them in the direction of "Opera in English," have been forced, after a few melancholy experiences of its slip-shod methods, to sacrifice their patriotism and intelligence in order to avoid such an infliction in the future.

In recent years, it is true, more than one notably fine operatic translation has appeared.[1] It is, however,

[1] Of which Mr. Jameson's monumental translation of "The Ring," Mr. Wallace's vivacious rendering of Berlioz's "Faust," and the workmanlike version of "Tristan and Isolde" by H. and F. Corder are only a few examples. Mr. Claude Aveling has made

obvious that, the more highly developed the foreign song-speech from which the translation has to be made, the greater will be the specialization of its words, and the closer their union with the music. It therefore follows that the greater the care and refinement of the original idiom (whether musical or verbal) the greater will be the difficulty of translating one half of it (the verbal), and, at the same time, leaving the other half (the musical) unaltered. A set of verses on a common topic written and set to a simple rhythm naturally offers no great difficulty to the translator, but if the topic and its expression in words and music are developed and specialized in harmony with some particular national ideal, the translator is at once faced by all the differences of national outlook and of linguistic and musical method. These differences also continually tend to become wider as art develops, and therefore his task of finding a "least-common-denominator" becomes increasingly difficult and sometimes impossible. Indeed, this is so true that one may almost say that the better the original song-speech the worse the translation must be.

Now, it is just on this point that those cultured people who object to translations are most emphatic. For they have no difficulty in proving that, even in the best translations, a satisfactory transference of the complete thought from one medium to another is impossible. It should, they say, not be attempted. It is not denied that a capable operatic translator can partially reproduce his original, but it is contended that, since modern Opera is founded on a close

some excellent translations (such as those of "Tess" and "Germania") into rhythmic prose, but these are, of course, not for use on the stage.

alliance of word- and music-phrases, and since this alliance is itself derived from national temperament and language, therefore (when a reproduction is attempted under widely different conditions of temperament and language, but under identical musical conditions) the result is something wholly different from and inferior to the original. The argument, as one sees, is derived from the nature of Opera itself. But this is no reason for ignoring the fact that the translation of foreign works and their performance in English is solely a matter of expediency. Let us grant that all translation is a makeshift. The question remains,—Is it better that foreign Opera should be made "accessible and intelligible" to the public at large or reserved for the enjoyment of the very few who can either understand or pretend to understand it?

Before leaving this phase of the question I wish to point out that it is everywhere assumed that the more the English public is familiarized with the sound of (translated) foreign Opera the more ready it will be to support a school of genuine English Opera when such a school begins to appear. This statement goes unchallenged almost day by day in the press, but it appears to me to be very far from axiomatic. It seems to imply that the public is in a condition both of impatience and ignorance, out of which it can be educated by performances of translated foreign Opera. As a matter of fact, the public throughout England is accustomed to hear carefully chosen English well and distinctly sung in "Musical Comedy," and it would not tolerate there the iniquitous translations to which it has to submit in "Grand Opera." The impatience of the public is not with its own language, but with a travesty of

its own language, and if translated Opera is ever to become popular in this country, the average standard of nineteenth century translation will have to be materially altered. Again, the ignorance of foreign Opera which is shown by the public is an ignorance founded on self-knowledge, that is to say, on a conscious dislike to certain aspects and incongruities of foreign operatic forms. This is a sign, not of despair, but of hope, and even our London operatic impresarios (who are, I suppose, as detached as any set of men can be from a knowledge of public opinion) may one day awake to the fact that there are some millions of people in London alone who will pay all the year round to hear music of which they approve, but who are not willing to sacrifice their money and their sincerity for the doubtful privilege of echoing the sentiments of the Frenchman, the German, and the Italian.

Finally, I must ask the reader to take a broad-minded view of the question as it affects the future, and to realize how utterly impossible it is for composers (and therefore for singers) to found any English declamatory style on translations. It would be as reasonable to expect the formation of a great school of painting from the contemplation, not of nature, but of line engravings "after the Italian masters."

To the composer this question is of the greatest moment, for he will have to convince the public that "English Opera" (that is to say, Opera written and sung in English) is the essential, while "Opera in English" (that is to say, foreign Opera translated into English) is only a makeshift. The recognition, not of this distinction, but of the importance to art of this distinction, is still imperfect, and we may be

pretty sure that, if ever the foreign opera-mongers here become aware of a national movement in the direction of National Opera, they will take care to make the confusion worse confounded.

The singers are perhaps more *immediately* concerned in this question than either the composers or the public, for the more they are compelled to sing translations the less likely they are to approach their art from the proper standpoint. By their very nature even the best translations must be, to some extent, stunted and distorted in their vocabulary: they must contain a certain number of unnatural expressions and odd, awkward turns of thought. The compulsions of rhyme, the necessity of making the English follow a melodic curve or the ending of a music sentence specially designed to amplify a foreign word-phrase, the laxity of French and Italian word-rhythms (which permits their junction with almost any musical-rhythm), the extreme stringency of the English word-rhythm (which calls aloud for one particular form of musical expression)—all these and many other factors combine to increase the artificiality of the translator's work. The singer, therefore, who is condemned to a long term of translated Opera will be able to make his existence tolerable only by a series of "fakes" and subterfuges; and, even if he is occasionally allowed to emerge from his fettered state, he will probably find that his past experiences preclude him from earning an (artistically) honest living in the world outside.

From the above considerations the reader will see that the question of accustoming the public to the performance of translated foreign Opera is by no means simple. Nor is it more possible on this question than on that of national-subvention to

draw conclusions applicable to England from the history of France, Italy, or Germany. In these countries there is a developed home product by whose side the semi-useless foreign Opera is welcome to exist for the same reason that we can afford to maintain a quantity of scrap iron at the tail-end of our navy list, because of the Dreadnoughts at the other end.

If we look at it from the standpoint of the English composer, whose one object is the establishment of an English Operatic School—I do not, of course, mean from his merely personal or selfish standpoint—it is not desirable, because, unless the translations are of the very highest standard, his own case is likely to be prejudiced with the public.

Again, from the standpoint of the singer, his art cannot be said to begin till it is founded on original English works: it is really impossible to adopt the common view that translated opera, that is to say "Opera in English," is a sort of bridge between "Opera in a foreign language" and "English Opera."

From the standpoint of the public there would be an undoubted gain provided—and it is a provision very difficult of fulfilment—that only such works were presented to it as might be reasonably expected not to clash with its strong operatic prejudices. There would also be an undoubted risk that the unavoidable failings of translation would change the attitude of the public from its present apathy to one of open hostility.

Before leaving this topic we may glance for a moment at the purely linguistic as opposed to the larger operatic difficulties of translation.

Every language, of course, differs in structure and

texture from every other language—it may be in a large, it may be in a small degree. These differences are the product of race combinations and divisions which are themselves caused and emphasized by a variety of factors, economic, political, religious, and dynastic. In addition to these factors there is the continual pressure of geographical and climatic condition. I need not burden the reader with any details of the first-named factors. It is enough to say that their influence is audible in practically every language of modern Europe. The effect of climate and of geographical position is, however, to be seen in a very simple comparison between our own country and the United States of America.

In England (which has an area of 52,000 square miles and a population of 31 millions) we have a small country with a much indented coast-line and a surface broken up by a multitude of rivers and low hills. The whole country is, so to speak, in small compartments. The climate is equable, but misty. From these conditions two results follow. In the first place, though England has enjoyed for hundreds of years a civilization and a written literature, her people, even at the present day, preserve such a diversity of dialect and delivery that a Cornish miner or a Sussex ploughman, after half a day's train-journey north, will find himself among people (say in Durham or Shropshire) to whom his speech is almost unintelligible. Again, the influence of England's water-laden atmosphere is seen in a sort of national "tiredness" of speech, "a muscular effeminacy," as it is called. There is a strong tendency to deprive the unimportant words of their strict, logical, and, as it were, hereditary values in order to express more vividly the larger poetic

ideas. It is as if the English attempted, by their word-groupings, to reproduce the events of an actual drama as seen through a veil of mist. The central idea is made to loom up into sudden, overwhelming size, while the subsidiary ideas remain scarcely recognizable figures of phantom and shadow. In unison with this tendency we find a continual rubbing-down and rubbing-out, not so much of single consonants as of complete syllables, and even groups of syllables. With this goes a persistent mingling and degeneracy of vowel-sound which would long ago have produced uniformity of speech (even in such a mixed race as the English) were it not for the surface conditions of the country.

Now, in the United States we have the exactly opposite conditions. With an area of over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles and a population of 76 millions the country has an unindented coast-line and a surface that is a mere flat plain, with mountains running down each coast. The result is that no group of Americans is, in general, secluded from any other group. Wherever a citizen of that country is located an easy way is open to him to any other part of his vast plain. We find him, therefore (with a much greater admixture of blood than the Englishman, and living in a country seventy times the size of England), yet with differences of dialect that are unappreciable when compared with those in England. Again, the dryness, brightness, and exhilaration of his atmosphere produce an exactly similar effect on his delivery. To an Englishman he seems to be continually accentuating words that are of no importance whatever to the sentence, though actually he is not giving these words any greater prominence than they would receive in French or Italian. His

vowel-sounds he dwells on rather than avoids, while their colour has a certain precision and sonority which appear to an Englishman to be—not new and "up-to-date" like his ideas—but old-fashioned and slightly prosy. It is as if he had taken his vowel-system from England to America about a couple of hundred years ago, and had then and there stopped tampering with it.

Now, these distinctions between English and American are only the slight, superficial differences which have crept into a language under the altered conditions of a (comparatively) few years. The differences which the translator has to face are of a much more deep-seated character, for they spring either from difference of original stock, from difference of environment during long lapses of time, or from a combination of these two differences.

They comprise every conceivable variety of accent and delivery, of word- and sentence-structure. His original may be distinguished by a complete grammatical apparatus of word prefixes or suffixes, none of which is perhaps used in his own tongue. He may have to rhyme a translation in a language which has only one-fourth the number of rhyme-endings possessed by his original. If he is an Englishman he may even have to translate back into his own speech a poem which was born in an Englishman's brain, and then translated into a foreign tongue and fitted-out with musical rhythms appropriate to that translation.[1]

All these difficulties he has to overcome, but a worse problem remains; for, under the varying influences of race and of geographical and climatic condition, the declamatory rhythms of the two

[1] *E.g.* Verdi's "Otello" and Debussy's "Blessed Damozel."

languages in which he is working have been developed along lines so different that they bear no resemblance at all to each other. In one language he may feel the cold glitter of an alert, polished, logical nation: in another the "vowell'd undersong" of a passionate and world-weary people: or he may have to take the heavy thud, the hoarse martial shouts of a nation marching under arms, and express them in a language whose deep rhythmic utterance is that of the greatest of all tragic poets and of the solemn majesty of the Bible.[1]

Now, if we set a litterateur to make a *prose* translation of a metrical original, it is quite plain that his task is by no means easy. He has to express to his readers foreign ideas in words whose connotation is different from that of his original. He is, indeed, unfettered by any considerations of metre, rhyme, or rhythm; yet one has only to turn to the best English prose translations of foreign poetry to see how immeasurably they fall below our ordinary artistic and literary standards.

But, now, suppose the translator compelled to work both from and into verse. The difficulty of his task, except by the merest accident, is at once increased,

[1] The reader who wishes to see how baffling these difficulties can be, even under the conditions of translation between two allied languages and of extreme simplicity of vocal phrase, may look at the first six words of Brunhilde's awakening in "Siegfried," "Heil dir Sonne; Heil dir Licht." In these two phrases there are only seven notes of music, and yet it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory transference of the original song-speech. Mr. Jameson's rendering, "Sun, I hail thee; Hail O light," is, I suppose, as good as it can be, yet in each phrase he is forced to effect a junction or carrying-over of the thought (*i.e.* between "I" and "Hail" and between "O" and "light") which is quite absent from the original, and which subtly alters the song-speech in a way not intended by the composer.

because his possibilities in the selection of words and ideas with which to express his original are more restricted. Still, even here he is not completely fettered: he has a certain amount of "play," a certain freedom of movement.

But now go one step further and imagine every syllable of the original fitted with a note of music carefully designed, by means of pitch, length, and force, to intensify its intellectual idea: imagine all the music-groupings so skilfully arranged that they everywhere mirror the exact shape, and even the spirit, of the original language: suppose also that the composer has taken advantage of every possible nicety in the way of vowel-colour and consonantal-separation: suppose the text to have been written and re-written (either by the composer or by the dramatist in collaboration with the composer) till the whole song-speech has been welded into an apparently single conception; then hand the whole conception over to the translator, instructing him that, without changing the music,[1] he is to reproduce the thought in a language whose methods and structure are perhaps in violent contrast with those of the original. Obviously the translator is now almost completely fettered. His task is more severe than

[1] It is generally assumed to be the highest form of virtue in a translator that he should never alter a single note of the original music. In purely melodic phrases this may be a good rule, but the gain is doubtful in isolated declamatory phrases. Of course, if the translated word-phrase *can* be made to fit the actual notes of the music it is better to preserve the latter; but if their preservation can only be effected at the expense of naturalness and intelligibility—which, after all, are the prime objects of the original song-speech—it would be better to make some alterations, as slight as possible, in the music. To this course I do not see how any composer could legitimately object, provided he were willing to run the initial risks of translation.

any with which an ordinary litterateur is accustomed to deal. Indeed, the only purely literary problem which resembles it at all—and the two are not comparable in point of difficulty—is the problem of translating some such exquisite and highly finished original as Horace's Odes, a problem often attempted and never solved.[1]

It is plain that we need not expect, and we certainly shall not get, literary or dramatic perfection in an operatic translation. It was my original intention to show the reader, by means of quotation, what we *have* received in this way; but, after wading through the many waters of nineteenth century operatic translation, I have come to the conclusion that the mere sight of them would be more than enough to quench any love of Opera which he may possess.

Whatever I have said with regard to the verbal distortions and inversions of the early nineteenth century school of English Opera applies as specifically and with greater force to all the English translations down to the last quarter of the century. The reader need only select an opera at random from the more popular works of Rossini, Verdi, or Gounod to see how badly mauled they all were in translation. The first twenty pages of "Il Trovatore" will teach him all the wickedness (in this kind) that he can possibly wish to know. He must remember, however, that it is not fair to criticize these efforts of the Muse

[1] Perhaps also the mediaeval accomplishment of writing poems whose words all began with the same letter. Hucbald, the Flemish theorist, addressed a poem of this sort on the subject of "Baldness"—("Carmina Clarisonae Calvis Cantate Camoenae")—to the Emperor Charles the Bald; but it is not known what form the monarch's retaliation took.

from any other than a literary standpoint. They were often made, not for use by singers in the theatre, but with the object—not always achieved—of helping students to understand the meaning of the original. From the artistic point of view the translator's aim was not much above that of a player in the classical game of "Aunt Sally." He merely wanted to knock the pipe out of her mouth. In front of him so many musical notes were stuck up, and he had to "chuck" a syllable at each. The game was really not very difficult, and the player was, of course, paid for it, whether he won or not.

It must not be supposed that this race of translators came (as they deserved) to a sudden and unpleasant end about the third quarter of the nineteenth century. There was at that time an undoubted improvement in the quality of our English translations, but the tradition of carelessness died hard. Even within the past twenty-five years or so translations have been published by whose side such an execrable work as Pittman's "Rienzi"[1] appears as a miracle of clearness and distinction. It is difficult to apportion the blame in many of these works. Foreign music engravers and perhaps foreign translators may have innocently conspired together to produce the sad wreckage of the English language which we see in some of these publications. The fact, however, that such words were ever allowed to be engraved under the music, shows strikingly the contempt with which the publisher was accustomed to view the average intelligence of a musical Englishman.

My copy of "Cavalleria Rusticana" bears, on its outside cover, the names of three distinguished publishers, one Italian, one German, and one

[1] Published by Fürstner, Berlin.

English, as well as the legend, "Price 7s. 6d. net." Let us see what Italy, Germany, and England offer us in return for our 7s. 6d.

All through this work the word-phrases seem to have been set to the music with the sole object of outraging their natural accent and rhythm. There are so many examples of this that full quotation is impossible, but, as an instance, I may cite (from p. 81) the phrase where the singer, after two bars rest, begins the sentence "of her own husband forgetful," with the word "of" set on the down-beat.

No attempt is made to distinguish between the English letters "I" and "J," "I" and "Y," or "V" and "W"; and consequently we get such expressions as "And jou" (p. 99), "love mi once more" (p. 104), and "Ioys of Heaven" (pp. 57-62). Some of these mistakes—in a tragedy, remember—read like conscious "Sam Wellerisms." For instance:

"Me Lola is avaiting
All other lowers hating" (p. 39).

"I vill now go in" (p. 102).

"I have wainly promised to conducto the altar" (p. 169).

"To hus it has been told" (p. 89).

Then, again, the translator, or perhaps the engraver, seems to have experienced great difficulty in deciding into how many syllables an English word would cut up. The word "injured" is set as a trisyllable to three quavers (p. 90), and the word "entrance" (in the sense of "a place of entry") is set in a similar way with the second of its *three* syllables falling on the down-beat of a bar (pp. 105 and 106). The word

"home" is written to a crotchet and a quaver as if it rhymed with "foamy" (p. 33), while "more" and "late" are regarded as rhyming respectively with "Tory" and "Katie" (pp. 106 and 118). Even such a common word as "love" is exalted to rhyme with "Tovey" (p. 78).

I need not dwell on such curious English expressions as

"Whit greut vchemence" (p. 115)

"Condemned am I, ah! an out cash nothing hat an out cash" (p. 34)

"I care on naught, ehi la!" (p. 36)

"We weary while from labors are holden,
To thee o light of keaven" (p. 19)

"Robtd of my youthful honor, robdt of my honor" (p. 82)

or on Turridu's remark, which he is directed to make "whit sorrow":

"If should I returnot"

or on his passionate dialogue with Santuzza:

T. "What have you spoken"?
S. "What you wanted and I am glok"
T. "Ah! by Heaven!"
S. "Strike in may bosom"
T. (drawiny back). "No" (p. 103).

Well may the translator wind up the opera (p. 175) with the romantic stage direction,

"The sound of confuses voices comes nearen."

This translation is, of course, not an average specimen of its class, but, I hope, a unique example of the depths to which the collaboration of a (presumably) foreign translator and music engraver can

drag down our language.[1] Since the production of Mascagni's first opera, several excellent English operatic translations have been issued, and we may say that, whenever in recent years the task has been entrusted to men possessing the necessary combination of literary skill and musical knowledge, there has been a very evident and encouraging desire on their part to produce good artistic work. By its very nature this work is, as I have said, a makeshift, and a makeshift whose expediency is still matter of discussion. Everyone will, however, agree that, if Opera is to be translated, the work must be done, not as it was in the first half of the nineteenth century by literary and musical hacks, but by men—Englishmen—of wide culture. Mere literary facility is useless unless it is supported by musical ability, and especially by an intimate knowledge of the human voice.

Above all, it is necessary that the translator should keep clearly before his mind the harm that will certainly result from bad and careless work. The public is very quick to detect, not so much inaccuracies of translation and literary faults, as discrepancies between the translation itself and the speech which is their most prized heritage. At the first suspicion of any unnaturalness it either laughs or takes fright, and these are the two things which every lover of English Opera most wishes to avoid.

The reader may think such a warning as I have given above quite uncalled for at the present day,

[1] There is a different (and much better) translation by F. E. Weatherly prefixed to this opera, but the words, as I have quoted them above, are the actual words as they are engraved underneath the music, presumably for the use of our unhappy vocalists.

but, as a matter of fact, though the consciousness of this risk is growing, there is still need of continual watchfulness. Even the sumptuous vocal score of M. Delius's "A Village Romeo and Juliet"—a work that was specially produced by Mr. Beecham to further the interests of "British" Opera—contains on its very first page (in the "list of characters") such grotesque mistranslations as these:

Bäuerin - - - - - - -	Twoman
Der arme Hornist - - -	The poor hornist player
Erster Zweiter } Schiffer - - -	First Second } Barge Third
Dritter	
Ort der Handlung - - -	Place ofaction
Schmuckwarenfrau - - -	Nick-nack ven dor-woman

These things are not of great importance, but they are quite enough to make an Englishman rub his eyes and wonder whether the word "British" does not contain some meaning with which he is not at present acquainted.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMPOSER AND HIS PUBLIC

BEFORE closing this short study of the relationship between Nationalism and Opera I wish to draw the historical threads, as it were, to a point, and to show how the early eighteenth century conditions are—as a necessary result of our long-continued attitude of national exteriorization—reproduced in England at the present day. More especially I wish to dwell on these deterrent conditions as they affect the composer, and, in order to do this, it will be convenient to group the discussion under four headings,—(1) The Public; (2) The Composer's Conditions; (3) Foreign Influences; (4) Material Necessities. Within the limits which I have set myself it is not possible to more than hint at the many aspects presented by these four topics. On the last alone—the material necessities of the case—involving, as it does, the question of State-aided Opera, a volume might, and ought to, be written.[1] I shall, however, content myself with pointing out some of the factors which must be taken into consideration when one is studying the question.

(1) THE PUBLIC.

No change, however sudden and startling its manifestation, occurs spontaneously in the realm of art.

[1] See Bibliography at end.

The *appearance* of such a change may be there, but, if we search narrowly into the surroundings of the change itself, we shall always find that it is really as natural, as organic, and as inevitable as the procession of changes which brings to the tree its leaf, its blossom, and its fruit. Among these strange and seemingly causeless offsettings of the human intellect we may place the first flowering of Opera in Italy; but this flowering, which, if it is considered without attention, appears to be merely the "sport" of a few young Florentine noblemen, has its roots deep down in the preceding century of Greek culture, and is indeed no more than the last and most beautiful blossom on the tree of the Italian Renaissance.

So with the cutting when it is transplanted: the soil is new and the climate is new: both have their effect, and if they are not suitable the cutting must die. Hence it comes that, in estimating the possibilities of the future here in England, we must first of all estimate the possibilities of our soil and climate: for the composer and the impresario, however skilfully they may do their planting, can go no whit—in the way of honest, healthy, gardening under the sun—beyond that soil and climate,—the English people. I say "in the way of honest, healthy, gardening," because I firmly believe that all our operatic history shows that when once its purveyors turn, as they have generally turned, to the sickly heat of the forcing house, they produce, it may be a beautiful foreign flower, but a flower which cannot thrive and never has thrived when it has once felt the winds and rains and the uncertain suns of our climate.

I have already pointed out in an earlier chapter the reasons why music has never been developed

here into a mode of national expression, and, in especial, the methods by which English operatic activity—never high in relation to that of Italy, France, and Germany—was stunted and twisted into other forms by a foreign culture introduced and maintained for social reasons. That this culture has never penetrated downwards very far is both natural and gratifying, for it is very certain that, whatever form the English Opera may take in the future, it must claim its legitimacy, not as an expression of the acquired tastes of the aristocracy, but of the dramatic instincts of the people. When once we have set within it this core of hope we can rest assured of its healthy development, nor need we have any anxiety that the dramatic genius of the nation will ever find itself faced by any deep and abiding law of nature which will prevent that genius expressing itself in terms of music.

But, to ensure the future possibility of this expression, we need two conditions at the present time —what I may call a good soil and good gardeners; that is to say, we need, on the one hand, a sufficient number of people who are willing and ready to hear and pay for English Opera, and, on the other, a sufficient number of composers who have enough sympathy with the public to enable them to supply the operas that are wanted.

In this connection the first question which is generally asked is, "To what state of receptivity has the Public of the present day been brought?" In other words, "How far can the Composer look to the Public as a motive power?" The actual forces which have been at work on the public for the past twenty or thirty years are, of course, well known to all, and though they are—in England, at

any rate—historically interesting, their enumeration need not occupy our attention for long. The *result* of these forces is, however, still matter of—I am afraid not very disinterested—controversy.

In the provinces, then, we have a number of travelling opera companies, such as those associated with the names of Carl Rosa and Moody-Manners, which from their earliest beginnings have based their efforts on one of the two principles which govern the production of National Opera—performance in the vernacular. One fact alone has made this principle possible, and indeed inevitable to them, the fact that, in our provincial towns, they have had to appeal, not to a small cosmopolitan aristocracy, but directly to the masses of the people. These opera companies have also partially grasped the second principle—the necessity for the production of works by English composers. I use the word "partially," because I feel that, though they can show an extremely honourable list of such productions, they have also, in a measure, neglected to face the actual musical conditions of the country. The fact that we have a population of some millions anxious to support the lighter forms of English Opera is a very serious one, and it is not the less so because it is generally made the subject of a single contemptuous sentence in books of operatic criticism. As far as I know practically every opera company decided at the outset of its career to ignore, without further thought, the weight of this popular tendency.

The situation, however, created by this craving was and is charged with possibilities. The accumulated mass of talent and material only needed direction, not to turn it out of its channel, but to broaden and purify that channel. But, instead of

boldly seizing the situation and endeavouring to develop from it a genuine, perhaps more complex and highly organized type of National Opera, the opera companies were content to adopt the somewhat rigid criteria of "Grand Opera" as evolved on the Continent, and to attempt, not always too successfully, to impose these on their audiences. Naturally this has forced them, as far as the large mass of the theatre-going public is concerned, into a position of some seclusion which may be roughly, and I think not unfairly, estimated by comparing their combined activities with those of the many successful travelling companies of "Comic Opera" and "Musical Comedy." In addition to that, it has left them artistically in a sort of high-and-dry detachment: they have no National Opera to draw on, no source from which they can continually vitalize their activities: their original productions are few, and they run the risk of sinking to the position held by Covent Garden as mere purveyors of second-hand goods, repeaters to-day of what was said on the Continent yesterday.

In studying this question it is not sufficient for us to dismiss or evade the problem merely because the two forms of activity—a highly complex foreign art-form and a simple, almost primitive, home art-form—appear to us to be so widely divided from each other. Nor is it advisable for us to lay down, for our own use, the dividing-line between the higher and the lower types of Opera, which has been established on the Continent by and for Continental use. The position of that dividing-line varies very strikingly even among those two or three nations which have evolved the more complex forms of Opera. For us who are only now attempting to found a

school it is better to keep in mind how small and apparently trifling were our own early gropings towards comedy and tragedy: nor should we forget that, in Italy itself, it is only 300 years since Opera came to Rome literally and physically *on a cart.*

We cannot, then, arrive at any knowledge of present-day public appreciation unless we have the whole of the facts before us and then weigh them without prejudice. This method, however, of dealing with the actual, as opposed to the possible, facts which make up the stream of our musical life, has never much commended itself to our musical students, who show a gentlemanly knowledge of the ripples on the surface-water, but a very decided and clean-handed ignorance of the river-bed. What should we think of a government department which issued a blue-book on emigration and compiled its tables only from lists of first-class passengers? Or of a scientific investigator who, discussing the question of infant mortality, were to confine himself to the peerage? In each case we should see the underlying fallacy and refuse to be hoodwinked by the deductions. But it is on such fallacies as these that our musical students and antiquaries usually base their estimates of the present and their forecasts of the future. They revolve, as a rule, in a circle whose circumference is very small when compared with the vast outside circle of the national life, and this endless agitation to-and-fro within a small space acts on them in much the same way as the ice in a freezing machine; but with a difference, for the custard does eventually fulfil its destiny and come out to see the world and be eaten, whereas they do not: and the longer they stay inside the more hard-set their ideas become and the more frozen their conviction that

(though all their whirlings and twirlings have never resulted in anything but a lowering of their own temperature) yet they represent the highest and most perfect type of existence, and that all the world outside their little box is clamouring for entrance and for the privilege of being turned into a pretty little Neapolitan ice.

Of course with critics of a certain mental bias this cold and narrow logic soon hardens into a fixed habit-of-mind which has a twofold effect. First, it prevents them from seeing the existence, outside their own immediate circle, of a genuine admiration for the higher types of music combined with an equally genuine belief that these higher types, as evolved abroad, cannot be made the basis in this country for any artistic advance; and second, when it is pointed out to them that, historically, these higher types, when transplanted from abroad, have never been known to develop here, the same habit-of-mind prevents them from making an excursion of enquiry into the possible existence of other bases for development. Instead of doing this they prefer to turn their heads away and lift their eyes to the stars —a praiseworthy position for an artist, provided his feet are on firm ground.

If we turn now from the position in the provinces to that in London we see the same small casual opera-seasons which, until Mr. Beecham's advent, gave us our only opportunities of hearing Opera in English. These seasons, whether given by one of the provincial travelling opera companies, by a private speculator, or by a syndicate, have occurred at no fixed intervals, and, with few exceptions, have concerned themselves solely with Foreign Opera in English. On the other hand, the striking taste of

the London public for all forms of light Opera has evolved a curiously complete apparatus for displaying this form of entertainment. Managers and syndicates, relying on this taste, have been able to invest with profit large sums of money and to educate Londoners to a point where their eyes and ears demand something more complete and perfect *in its presentation* than can be found in any other capital in the world. I do not say, of course, that the actual presentation has anything to do with the value of a musical work. All we can say is that it is a fair index of the popular esteem in which the musical work is held. It is not, however, solely in the presentation of light Opera that London has advanced beyond the rest of Europe, for, almost unobserved, and certainly despised by most of our orthodox musicians, a characteristically English school of comic opera has grown up in our midst. The works of this school, unlike those of our orthodox musicians, are by no means either unobserved or despised on the Continent. It is a matter of indifference under what title we know this school; it is sufficient to say that it exists and ranges from the polished and refined melody of the "Savoy Operas" through the musical gaiety and tenderness of Mr. Sidney Jones to the mellow charm and humour of Sir Charles Stanford's "Shamus O'Brien." Furthermore, it always has existed (under one name or another) from the earliest days of Opera till now, and we must be content to put up with the hard things[1] that are said about it in its present stage,

[1] Dr. Walker (in his *History of Music in England*) characterizes musical comedy as having "enthroned on a very solid cash basis ideals of verbal and musical vulgarity." Later on he speaks of Sullivan as having no "steadiness of artistic purpose ... and

simply because it has popular appreciation behind it, and is therefore a possible basis for development and improvement.

The really vital point in the situation thus created is that on two or three occasions timid attempts have actually been made to develop from this popular form of Opera a higher and more complex type. None of these attempts has been fully successful, but I need not point out that this does not affect their interest. It is to Sir Arthur Sullivan, whose early opera, "The Sapphire Necklace," was never produced owing to the unsuitability of its "book," that we have to look for the first leanings towards this new development. In "Haddon Hall" and "The Beauty Stone" we find indubitable evidence of a desire to enlarge the scope of his outlook and to inform his musical ideas with a greater share of poetry. But it was not till the production of "Ivanhoe"[1] that we find him quite consciously endeavouring to begin that work of development which he felt was the only solution of our national operatic problem. There is a certain pathos in the reflection that the man who had so much refined the art of comic opera, and in doing so had endeared himself to his whole generation, was forbidden by the very qualities of his success to move with freedom outside those limits. "Ivanhoe" did not succeed. It is, indeed, nothing but a confused succession of events to which the composer's strong sense of the theatre could not give even the appearance of unity. The closing of the English Opera House

without that, a composer, whatever his technical ability may be, is easily liable to degenerate into a mere popularity-hunting trifler."

[1] Written at the suggestion of Queen Victoria.

in Cambridge Circus is matter of painful history, on which we need dwell no farther than to point out that, if its promoters had made the same substantial provision for a supply of English operas that they made for a supply of bricks and mortar, the former would have run no more risk of collapsing than the latter.[1]

Shortly after Sir Arthur Sullivan's death a second and carefully premeditated attempt was made to extend the boundaries of light Opera. The work chosen for production was "Ib and little Christina," by Captain Hood and Mr. Leoni, and it was fully understood at the time by its promoters that its success would mean the turning of a new page in the history of operatic development in England. That page, unfortunately, still remains unturned, but on it we may read some valuable lessons. We may notice that while "Ivanhoe" calls for a much larger physical equipment—in the way of singers, orchestra, and stage-setting—than any of its composer's Savoy operas, "Ib and little Christina" was actually produced at the Savoy Theatre with the same staff of artists which had, just before, been performing one of Sullivan's comic operas. This difference, however, which seems so great to anyone engaged in theatrical work, is to the public a matter of the smallest account. It is to the material of the play itself that the audience addresses itself, and in this we observe a curious reversal of the two composers' positions; for, while the Englishman weaves into the large texture of his work many of those fanciful colours and delightful half-tones which had

[1] There was an equally unsuccessful scheme of English Opera at the Lyceum Theatre in 1809. In 1838 Barnett conducted a season that only ran for a week.

come to be associated with the words "Savoy Opera," the Italian gives us a smaller fabric, apparently nearer in actual scale to the old Savoy pattern, but really farther removed from it by reason of a warmth of tint and a strangeness of design which were completely unfamiliar to his audience. Under the circumstances this was inevitable, and it was equally inevitable that neither Mr. Leoni's charming melancholy nor his exquisite prettiness of orchestration could so far prevail with his audiences as to make them forget the things which had been.

Here we come back to the old deep-rooted objection which we have studied in the eighteenth century, the natural objection of the Englishman, not to a good thing, but to a good thing in which he has no part. And it is on this very point that one has the greatest hope of English theatrical audiences. As concert-goers, it is true, they have little experience, and will applaud both good and bad alike furiously and whole-heartedly.[1] They will, indeed, hear out, with a resigned and patient inattention, any long, dull work which has been recommended to them as "good," and, at the end of their glum sitting, will brighten up and offer their applause as a nervous apology for their lack of interest. But as soon as they enter the theatre all this attitude of humble-minded self-sacrifice vanishes, and its place is taken by a sort of hereditary self-assurance. Each man has put down his money and knows what he wants. He may not get it, but in that case no amount of superior advice will persuade him that he has.

[1] Perhaps explained by the fact that to the masses concert-going, and especially foreign concert-going, is a much more modern institution than the play.

Our concert audiences are perhaps being educated into a state of greater artistic discrimination, but this education cannot proceed very quickly, because it is only an infinitesimally small proportion of our whole population that attends concerts. On the other hand, theatrical performances have been popular ever since such things came into existence, and consequently theatrical audiences have by now acquired a very clear idea as to what they want and what they do not want. It is just this fact that lends so piquant an interest to the situation when a composer or an impresario pits his brains against those of the public on the production of a new work, for though it is constantly asserted that audiences need to be educated up to a certain level of receptivity before they will applaud (and pay for) an opera which an impresario desires them to applaud (and pay for), it must be remembered that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this education is really not a process of *e*-ducation at all—that is to say, a drawing-out of what is good and worthy in them—but a process of *ad*-ducation—that is to say, a leading up to them of new and strange conceptions by which they are required to readjust their previous artistic ideals. But these ideals, however easily criticized in the light of foreign achievements, are the result of a long course of genuine artistic self-education, and it is found that in practice the English people are very slow to abandon any mental position which they have gained: the more so because it seems the surer to them from the difficulty which they have experienced in reaching it.

The result of this continual struggle is the existence of a problem which is continually referred to and discussed in our journals, and which generally takes the

form of a question as to whether sufficient "spade-work" has yet been done to give our impresarios and composers a proper field in which to exercise their talents as musical gardeners. But though it would seem to be the province of a good gardener first to ascertain the nature of the soil and then to plant therein some such native root as may naturally have a chance of life rather than to select a foreign plant and to stick it, an inch or so deep, in any patch that happens to show a little top-dressing, yet this plan has never been greatly in favour with our operatic gardeners.

Hence the question of "spade-work" becomes a never-failing subject for their discussions, and one might suppose that, with all this burning interest in the topic, they would by now have arrived at very definite conclusions, at any rate as to the exact amount of "spade-work" already done and the amount still to do. But this is far from being the case, for the man who wishes (for reasons of his own) to go on performing "Maritana" and "The Bohemian Girl" considers that practically no "spade-work" has been done at all, and that it is essential that these two operas should, as it were, be used for a great many years to break the ground. On the other hand, the enthusiast who wishes to enjoy such humble delights as "Salome" and "Elektra" afford considers that no "spade-work" at all is left to do, and that it is only necessary to spread a good thick layer of advertisement on the heavy English soil to procure a satisfactory artistic crop.

Even those men whose business it is to stand aside and gauge with accuracy the contending forces of our contemporary musical life seem to be puzzled at times by this question. I will content myself with

citing some words from an excellent article on the "Possible Developments" of Opera in England which appeared in the *Morning Post* of Jan. 17th, 1910. In that article the critic, in speaking of Mr. Beecham's (then) forthcoming season of "Grand" Opera, says:

> "By constituting the trial season of the details already announced, it is taken for granted that the public is already sufficiently educated in the rudiments of Opera to be able to proceed to the higher stages as represented by works which for the most part are written by the light of modern development of the form. The only difficulty that arises is the question whether the public has had the full opportunity of making the acquaintance of the more involved operatic shape, and whether it will not be advisable to give several seasons of an experimental character before deciding as to whether or not a public ready to take intelligent and continuous interest in music-drama exists.... Mr. Beecham would be well advised to make his plans for giving two seasons of opera a year for at least three years before arriving at the definite conclusion that a public for opera does not exist. These seasons should be of a special character, bearing in mind the fact that, compared with other nations, we in England know nothing about Opera. It has as yet to be made as much part of our lives as is the oratorio. Therefore, though much educational work has already been done, there is much more to do. Mr. Beecham must 'coach' his public in opera before he attempts to examine them, and the

process should, as it is hoped it will, be extended over more than one season before the pupil, willing as he undoubtedly is, can be considered as fit for examination in his readiness to take intelligent and continuous interest in music-drama."

Yet in the same journal, six months later,[1] we read the following criticism of the "Opera-Comique" season which Mr. Beecham had just announced:

"There is no reason why the British temperament, which has already shown the readiest appreciation of the form of Musical expression known as Grand Opera, after due study should not take readily to it" (*i.e.* to Opera-Comique). "The present degree of appreciation of grand opera, however, has been only arrived at after a long course of education, in which the representations in English have taken an active part. The hearing of grand opera in English has done much to foster a genuine love for the form which otherwise would have been of much slower growth."

I do not quote these two extracts for any other reason than to show that, under our present system of leaving the great majority of the people out of account, there is a genuine doubt in the minds of even our best-informed observers as to the extent to which an impresario can rely on his public; for it is, of course, quite impossible that Mr. Beecham's short spring season of Opera (which had intervened between the writing of these two criticisms) could have effected this startling change.

[1] May 2nd, 1910.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Beecham's vague question as to whether "there does, or does not, exist in England a public ready to take intelligent and continuous interest in music-drama *per se* if it had the chance?" is unreal. It also implies a species of fallacy, because it presupposes, first, a detachment of art from the art-producer, and, second, a non-existent artificiality of social condition. On the first of these points I need say little, as it obviously degrades art to the level of a toy, and no argument based on it is worth a moment's consideration. The second is equally ignoble and equally fatal to the claims of true art, for it assumes that a great mass of vigorous and intelligent people can exist so totally devoid of personality that the mere exhibition to them of the artistic expression of alien personalities will satisfy their ideals. If this were so, our operatic history would, of course, be very different from what it actually is. We should long ago have put the national mind to what would have been its proper use, that of a sponge to soak up the intellectual and emotional achievements of Italy, and to produce (by some mysterious alchemy unknown to nature) new developments of our own. It is not so, however; and the history of our long operatic struggle shows that it is not so. Indeed, in any other walk of art but in that of Opera this zany-logic would not be tolerated for a minute. What we have in England is not a coherent, artistically united nation, but a nation split up, as far as music goes, into mutually opposed parties. In Italy, France, and Germany we have precisely opposite conditions: in each case a nation homogeneous and artistically united. Speaking broadly, we may say with truth that the effect of any musical work, native or foreign, on the national consciousness

is much the same within any one of these countries, though naturally it differs greatly as between one country and another. In England, on the other hand, we are psychologically in much the same position as we were when Italian Opera first came to our shores two hundred years ago. Artistically we may be a little more advanced, but we must be careful to note that the three factions which existed in the early eighteenth century—the aristocratic patrons of purely foreign Opera, the semi-denationalized professional musicians who attempted to cultivate English Opera by a mechanical repetition of foreign formulae, and the adherents of popular entertainment—are still with us in the twentieth. It cannot be said that the aristocratic patronage of foreign Opera has altered in character or method one jot in those two hundred years, nor can we well say that Wagner is imitated any better to-day than Mendelssohn was yesterday and Handel last week. Any living change, then, will have to be looked for in a comparison between the purely native activities in the simple forms of Opera then and now. To sum the matter up, the reader will see that the whole question of "public receptivity" is illusory, and its discussion, therefore, never-ending. It is, in short, a red-herring drawn across the track of the important question, "On what can we found a National School of Opera?" and to that question our present lowly and undeveloped state need not prevent us giving the only answer possible, "On similar foundations to those which served Italy, France, and Germany—the national temperament and the national convictions."

(2) The Composer's Conditions.

Now, the one person on whom the weight of these actualities presses most heavily, and who has, at the same time, to look most anxiously to the lifting force of their possibilities, is the composer. For, while the actualities exist for him as the ever-present condition on which his daily life depends, he is forced, as it were, continually to strengthen the raising power of its ropes, and yet at the same time to draw from them some strand or other which may serve for his future use. These are the inevitable conditions of his work, and if he is to do that work he must, like any other worker, accept them.

The head of a great German publishing firm is reported to have said: "The worst of you English composers is that nobody wants you," and in that nut-shell lies the kernel that explains the composer's conditions. For, while the soldier, the sailor, the scientist, the manufacturer, and the foreign musician, each comes to his work supported by the knowledge that he is only the last in a long line of able and illustrious men to whose lives he can look up and by whose ideals he may expect acceptance, the English composer comes to *his* work, so to speak, out of the void. He has no forbears, or, at any rate, only a few the soundness of whose musicianship has left behind it no sound at all but the dismal echo of its own inefficiency : he has no traditions, for, if he has any knowledge of his country's other achievements, he knows that his musical traditions no more express his country's greatness than a Kaffir fiddle represents the greatness of Cremona. So, without traditions, without forefathers, unarmed and unprotected, he must stand up to the buffeting of winds and waves, a

tiny pinnacle of live rock whose only certainty is that when it has fallen someone may pick it up from the sea-shore where it is lying and place it, unlabelled, in the dust of a geological museum.

Let us endeavour to catch a glance of him at his work. The word "work," unfortunately, has a connotation for him very different from that which it has for the litterateur, the painter, or the concert composer. We only need to look at the huge annual volume of publishers' lists and the catalogues of our picture exhibitions to see that no litterateur or painter need occupy more than a small part of his time in the actual "placing" of his work. In each of these cases the general public demand for new work of all classes is large, and it may fairly be said that every man who is producing good sound work can find an outlet for it without excessive difficulty. The concert composer is, indeed, in not so good a position: the new books and pictures placed before the public each year number many thousands, while the number of new works performed at orchestral and chamber concerts in this country is comparatively small. Still, even here there are, and have been for many years, recognized centres—such as those at the Crystal Palace under the late Sir Augustus Manns, the concerts of the Philharmonic Society, the festivals, and the performances at Queen's Hall under Sir Henry J. Wood—where English composers have continually received, and still receive, the benefit of a careful and artistic presentation of their works.

But for the serious operatic composer, unless he be a millionaire or the friend of a millionaire, the outlook is quite different. When he enters the market he finds it filled with foreign wares which a certain portion of the public wishes to buy. Owing

to this fact, and to the disproportion between the expense of theatrical production and the number of persons willing to support this special form—Opera,—it is not more than once in several years that any work of his has a chance of performance. The consequence of this is, as one can see by reading almost any operatic biography, that his time is only occupied very slightly in actually writing music: the rest of it is spent in a continual and heart-breaking search for a market—a search which necessitates for its success the cultivation of every quality of cunning and intrigue most likely to break his self-respect and dam the flow of his artistic life.

These conditions, which are not familiar to the public mind, may be made plainer by a parallel. To put the English painter in the same position as the English operatic composer we should have to imagine that his only possible opportunity occurs, say, once a year, when a few extra feet of wall-space are reserved at a public gallery for the possible exhibition of a single modern English picture. This extra wall-space has to be fought for by every painter in the country, and its extra rent, we must imagine, has to be paid by the proprietors of the gallery. They, of course, are quite indifferent whether they hang an English or a Chinese painting, so long as they can take the gate money, and, as they know by experience that they can always rely on a certain section of the public to support a dead Chinaman instead of a live Englishman, they show a good deal of reluctance to hang the English picture. This is not unnatural from their strictly commercial point of view. But worse is to come, for it is found necessary that a painter, in order to paint a picture, must be *alive* at the time, and this makes it necessary (in most, though not all

instances) that they should pay him a fee for the temporary exhibition of his picture. This fee they very naturally grudge when they know that their attic is filled with a dusty array of old (and dead) masters who at any rate have, in Mr. Beecham's words, a "glorious and classic" inability to extract fees. Finally we must imagine that, whenever the public is admitted to see this picture, an army of jealous-minded artists has to be engaged at great expense, of whom a few inoffensive souls are employed to give the wall a suitable coat of paint, others to see that the picture hangs fair and square on its nail, but the vast majority to paint out as much of the picture as possible and to repaint it to suit their own complexions. Should we wonder if, in these circumstances, our country failed to produce a school of painters? Should we not rather have cause to marvel if she ever progressed beyond the stage of chalk and paving-stones?

Yet these are precisely and without exaggeration the primary difficulties that surround the composer who is struggling to express himself in this form of music. The painter is often happy in finding among the owners of great, and even small, houses a tradition that they should have a few modern pictures on their walls. These they can touch and handle if they wish to assure themselves that they are still in their frames: they can also (after one preliminary payment) look at them whenever they so desire without any charge: furthermore, they can reflect that, in common with the settees and over-mantels, the pictures are always sure of a certain welcome at the auctioneer's. But an operatic score is a much more impalpable thing. It cannot be hung upon a wall, or enjoyed without expense, or even put

into a sale with the tables and chairs. To the wealthy amateur it is as uneducative and unintelligible as a cuneiform inscription. So he leaves it alone, or, if it does happen to stray into his house, it meets with much the same chilling hospitality as that which the Archbishop extended to Mozart—a seat at the kitchen table.

These are the terms on which the operatic composer starts his race, but long before he has done his first lap he will have found out from the contemptuous indifference of publisher and impresario that it is not to be a clean race run "in strings," but a race in which he is privately disqualified before he starts. For the public, having been tricked and swindled once and twice and many times by its own countrymen's work, has grown cunning and resentful. It calls him a failure, and it is with that word ringing in his ears that he begins his work.

Now, no man who has his finger on the trigger likes to hear a bystander prophesying a certain miss. The composer certainly does not, and it generally throws him into a state of irritation and indignation with the public. This chronic indignation, after a few years, begins to show, first in his manner, then in his face, and last in his music, which, however well it may have begun, eventually becomes what the public said it would be—a failure. But whenever one finds two brothers, whose interests are fundamentally the same, continually on bad terms with each other, one may expect to hear most of the rights and wrongs of the case from the poorer brother. And this we do find. The public sits by comfortable and taciturn : the composer, allowing his grievance to prevadè his whole mind, falls into an unhealthy state

of altercation with the person who should be his best friend.

"A failure!" we may imagine him saying to the public. "It is not I that am the failure. It is you!"

"I!" says the astonished public. "Why, what do you mean? I don't write operas."

"No, but you listen to them; and it's your listening or not listening that makes me possible or impossible. I'm trying to do my job honestly. Why don't you do yours?"

"Well, so I do; but, you know, there's a limit, my friend; and after all your, shall I say, 'non-successes' . . . ?"

"Excuse me!" says the Composer, "*Your* non-successes, not mine. Why, you are as bad over your Music as a Frenchman is over his jockeys. He does give his Composers a chance, but as soon as he sees a Frenchman in the saddle, he says 'Oh, he can't ride! He's not English.'"

"Well, but perhaps he *can't* ride. . . ."

"Very probable! Think of the French cavalry! No, it won't do. It's simply a fad and a fashion. The English jockey is in possession there and the Foreign Musician is in possession here, and you're far too lazy and stupid to lift a finger."

"Many thanks, my friend, but I wish to ask you a question—*Why* is the English jockey in possession abroad and the Foreign Musician in possession here?"

"The reason is simple, and holds good in both cases. In *your* case it is because, while I have been doing my part (very well at times as you

know), you've been sulking in the corner with your pockets buttoned up tight. How do you think I'm going to eat and drink and sleep and write Music if you never give me a thought or a penny-piece? You make a great show with your horses and jockeys, your fat cattle, your prize sheep and your other household paraphernalia; but what about all the care and patience and time and money that you have spent on them? *You* made them, and they exist because you wish them to exist."

"Well, and why not?"

"Certainly! Why not? The Foreigner says the same thing about *his* household goods. But he says it also about his Music. And, when he says it, he acts up to it. *You* won't, of course. Yet you've got enough sense to know that if you don't put time and money into your cattle-breeding and horse-rearing industries you'll have neither cattle nor horses by and by, but you are far too dense to see that what applies to them applies just as plainly to Music. Do you think you could run any of your other National affairs with this shabby indifference? Of course you don't! And I know, by the look on your face, that you are going to say that Music is not a National affair at all. Well, whose fault is that?"

"I don't know, but at any rate not mine," says the exasperated Public. "I do my best to encourage the sort of thing I like in my own house. It isn't perfect by any means, I know, but I'm willing to learn, and you ought to be

teaching me. Only you won't. That's where the trouble is. And look here, my lad! I see one thing pretty clear in this discussion of ours, and that is that I mean to be master in my own house. You can come there whenever you like and as often as you like, and very welcome you'll be, only leave your foreign airs outside, for I don't like 'em any more than I like the foreign cattle and the foreign horses and the foreign sheep."

(3) Foreign Influences.

And so we come round to the old deadlock: the public, which is rich and vigorous and strongly national, asks for one thing, and the composer, who is poor and weak and slightly cosmopolitan, offers it another. And the result is always disastrous for the composer. Often by some chance influence of money or friends, or by a combination of both, he staves off the disaster for a time. He may perhaps, by constant and laborious imitation of some one foreign model, narrow his circle to the limits of a few thoughtful souls whose careful breeding has eliminated from their natures all delight in man's work save only in one man's—and these circles unhappily still exist in England—but in the end, be he clumsy worker, clever, serious-minded artist, even a genius, he is beaten, and beaten not in foreign battle nor in downright civil war, but by his own people in secret and murderous league with their own enemies.

How long will it be before we realize the fact that where the foreign musician is there is the enemy? He may come to this island in shoals, but he comes

for one purpose only—the money he can take back across the water, and well he knows that the surest way to make his position firm here is to denationalize our music.

I have just said that the English composer is beaten every time, and the pitiful proof of that assertion can be found in any book of general musical history. Open it and make yourself a list of all the great Continental musicians who have flourished during the past three hundred years: marshal the dates of their greatest activity and of their deaths: then turn to the names of the English composers of the same and of succeeding times: see what they have been doing. Almost without exception they have been gazing in cow-like astonishment at the building of the House of Rimmon, gazing at it and walking through it, not as the German, the Frenchman, and the Italian walked, with stiff knees and unbent head, but with weak knees and head bowed down.

Sometimes the foreign composer has exercised his influence only as a passing craze. He has been caught up, fondled, exalted to the skies, and then dropped as Mendelssohn was dropped. At other times—as in the case of Handel—he has exercised a sort of prolonged hypnotic spell which has lain so heavily on the tongues of Englishmen that for generations their only possible speech has been in his obsolete dialect. But observe here that, whether the foreign composer has been merely the idol of a generation or the repressing force of two centuries, the Englishman has always imitated him, and imitated him badly, like a clumsy parrot who will say to-morrow what he is taught to-day. His attempt has never been to do for his country what Mozart did

for Germany—to seize the highest achievements and ideals of a strange race, to pass them, as it were, through the fire of his own spirit, and then, when they had been purged of all strangeness, to bring them forth again in his own glorious utterance as a homage and a glory to his own country.

Nor was there ever any honest use or hope in the Englishman's process of imitation, for his successor never attempted to build up on his predecessor's work in the noble way that Beethoven built upon Mozart or Wagner upon Weber. Instead of that he was content to stand by in idleness while others were suffering in order that they might learn. He was content, with a guileless yet monstrous folly, to accept this vicarious toil and suffering in the vain hope that he might profit by its wisdom. But the wisdom never came to his heart nor the palm to his dustless hands. And his reproach was the reproach which the great Italian set against the names of all those who think to compass the victory without enduring the heat of the battle—that he and all his race had made themselves "not the sons, but the grandsons of Nature."

Let it not be thought for an instant that, in speaking of the foreign composers, one should bate any jot of honour or respect for that mighty phalanx of heroes who have interwoven their lives into a chaplet of glory for their country. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Weber, Wagner—they all gave themselves with a simple and perfect sincerity to the service of German art, and, in doing so, made Germany august. But what have they done for us? They have done nothing, and, but for our own blind stupidity, they might have done much. For the lesson which we have had

many opportunities of learning from them, but which we have never yet learnt, is the lesson that every nation, whatever its ideal, must itself pass through the fire to achieve that ideal.

We may stand by, as we have always stood by, passively sympathizing with the sufferings, the disappointments and the heartburnings of a nation struggling towards its destiny, but if they are not our own sufferings they count as nothing. And less than nothing is our cheap attempt to step in when the victory is won, to take from a nation its mere intellectual trophies, the hall-mark, as it were, and nothing but the hall-mark of its passage through the fire. When once struck, this intellectual hall-mark is at the disposal of the whole world. We may, indeed, take it; we may adopt it familiarly; we may place it on our own wares as soon as it has no meaning abroad; we may study and imitate and contrive till we produce wares that, on the surface, have the same or even a better gloss than that of the foreign article; but when we have done all this we have not yet begun to learn the lesson which we ought to have learnt long ago from Germany. To learn that we must learn to revere and respect, not the German music, but the spirit which produced that music, the moving spirit which was in the hearts of all the great German composers, strengthening them in their determination to give themselves wholly in service to their country or not at all.

To tread in this way-of-life is not easy: especially is it not easy for a professional man in this country. There are many obstacles in the path—the influences of early education, the personal attachments to particular works of art, the ties of friendship. All these are forces which hinder us when we try to approach

nearer to the consciousness of a national existence in art.

With regard to the lasting impression which early education makes on a musician's mind I need only say that, if the education were only given with its true object—that of drawing-out what is good in the pupil and not merely of imposing on him certain artistic conclusions drawn haphazard *as far as he knows* from premises *which possibly he might not admit*—then it could only be of benefit to him and to the community. To enforce this ideal of education is difficult, almost impossible, as every one will agree who has any knowledge of the present system, in which many individuals, often representing the highest executive types of many foreign countries, are let loose, sometimes in a single institution, and encouraged to fight out their mutual national antipathies. These personal (and international) conflicts are generally witnessed with sympathetic encouragement by the crowd of students which surrounds the ring; but it is probable that their parents, being further removed from the smoke and heat of the contest, take less interest in the sport when they begin to notice the mental paralysis which gradually sets in, not on the combatants, but on the bystanders.

The worst of it is that, among these combatants, there are many able and devoted foreign artists; but, if one may put it without offence, their ability is, naturally, an ability to interpret the art of their special country, and their devotion is a devotion of themselves to that one object. How strangely topsy-turvy our own ideas are on this subject may be seen by examining the criticisms passed on the life-work of some resident foreign artist or other. Such a man may have been engaged in a strenuous and life-long

propaganda on behalf of his own national ideals, but if, in the midst of this propaganda, he has shown the faintest suspicion of an interest in our national development—as opposed to our national acceptance of his country's ideals—he is immediately hailed as the saviour and protector not of his but of our country. Nor does the public voice in any way condemn a foreign artist who settles here, either because he regards himself as an artistic missioner, or with the (often avowed) object of trading on the public ignorance and apathy till such time as he has filled his pockets and can shake the English dust from his feet.

It is pleasant to be able to turn from these types and to acknowledge the presence among us of one or two foreign artists—rare birds of a happy migration —whose names are well known to all. They are the few who have been able to understand that, if they are to fulfil their task of sympathy and encouragement here, they must first alight, as it were, from the upper air, and take our own standpoint on the lower branches. Such a sacrifice deserves both honour and gratitude.

But, in addition to the foreign artist, we have also a large band of foreign-trained English artists, who exert a continual educational pressure on our musicians. Of the two sorts of foreign-trained artists, those who have actually been trained abroad and those who have picked up their foreign ideas at home, as one might pick up a second-hand German piano, the former is much less harmful. I do not think, indeed, that a man ever quite gets over that queer feeling which he connects with the Harwich boat; but when he is abroad he sees things that make him wonder, and, when he comes back, he often makes partial readjustment of his ideas. It is true that, if he is a composer, he

often spends the rest of his life in an absurd hesitation between doing what he wants to do and what he thinks he ought to do, like a schoolboy surreptitiously cracking nuts and at the same time keeping a wary eye on the schoolmaster. When the composer is in this ludicrous position he naturally gets very little light or leading from his personal circle or from his critics, for, so divergent are their viewpoints that, in the one case, they rub their hands together and chuckle, telling each other that at last they have got the real English, or Scotch, or Irish (which pleases him very much); while, in the other case, they whisper sagely to each other that he is carrying on the glorious traditions of Brahms, or Palestrina, or Okeghem (which, in a way, also pleases him very much). This sort of composer is perhaps inevitable under our present transitional conditions, but it is only fair to say that in those moments when his worship of the Fatherland is brought to an awkward standstill by the intrusion of his own personality, he does a great deal of good. As a type he stands midway between the two extremes. He has not, like Goring Thomas, wholly given in his allegiance to the foreigner, nor, like Sullivan, has he been able to throw off the foreign influence completely.

With the other type of teacher whom I mentioned above, the Englishman who has picked up his anti-English ideas in England, I must confess I have less patience. He—often *she*, by the way—is usually a person who has taken up music either as a hereditary way of making a living or as a pleasant accomplishment. A man of this sort is generally destitute of any real artistic impulse, and, in most cases, has a mind which is widened neither by reading nor travel. Unfortunately, this is exactly the sort of nature which,

in its student days, is willing to accept, and indeed craves most eagerly for, a purely intellectual provender. In dealing with such a case the aim of the teacher should be directed almost completely towards a development of character, but it too often happens that he adopts the much easier method of merely satisfying the pupil's appetite for musical facts.

This form of nutriment is swallowed, though not digested, in an almost miraculous manner by most English students, and after a few years the result shows very plainly in their musical constitutions. Both men and women soon learn to appreciate the advantages which come to them, intellectually, socially, and commercially, when once they have been comfortably placed in one or other of the little hollow circles whose semi-foreign culture is so pernicious in London. On the other hand, they fail to understand the heavy price which has to be paid for these advantages. In the case of the women we see a horde of eager, enthusiastic young girls crowding into our music-schools full of life and promise. The mill-handle goes round, and then, somehow or other, though a grain or two fit for the baker may emerge here and there, the greater part comes out, perhaps intellectually the finest flour of the fine, but not exactly the sort of which bread can be made. In the case of the men the process is much the same but the result is different, for, while the machine generally seems to produce on the feminine mind only a listless disregard and distrust of all musical expression, on the masculine mind it calls into existence an extreme pugnacity, even fanaticism, always on behalf of some small outcrop of foreign culture—a fanaticism whose too defiant expression generally leaves on one's mind a suspicion as to its genuineness. The effect of both these

denationalized types on our present state of artistic development is, of course, disastrous, and they represent forces with which we shall have to reckon increasingly in the future, for while the Amazon squadron of this foreign legion brings into the field a continually ascending degree of social prestige, the Centaur brigade, knowing that the battle must end when once its barbarian standard is pulled down, comes into the conflict determined to fight, tooth and hoof, in defence of that standard and its cabalistic symbols.

With regard to the second of the three obstacles which I instanced above as standing in the way of our complete realization of a national artistic consciousness—I mean the affection which we feel individually for certain art-works and certain art-types as actually offering us an expression of ourselves—I should like to point out that this is a difficulty which faces every nation whose art is still in making, and it is a difficulty that has been faced and overcome by every nation which has evolved a national form of expression. We can see this in the struggle which the German operatic composers waged with the Italian invaders, who, coming not once but many times, often appeared to have justified their raids by a permanent settlement in German territory. This was indeed not to be; for, as the Italian was continually weakened by his defeats in a foreign country, the German was strengthened to greater and more decisive victories. It is proper for us in reading the lesson of this long struggle to take courage from the German example, and to remember how doubtful was the tilt of the scales for generations. Indeed, it was not till well into Wagner's middle life that the German arm of the balance dipped slowly and fell into its present stable position.

Nor is it only from the Germans that we can learn those methods of national tenacity which, in every walk of life but music, are regarded as peculiarly British attributes. It is the usual easy custom for our cosmopolitan musicians to sneer at the exclusiveness of the French and to confound this exclusiveness with narrowness of intellect. "Such and such an Opera (which we know to be a masterpiece) took," it is said, "so many years travel to Paris": "So and so's symphony (which we also know to be a masterpiece) only arrived there yesterday and has already received its decree of banishment." But surely the question here is not what *we* think of this or that work, but what the Parisians themselves think will be the effect of that work on their own national forms of art. The French, whatever else they may be, are certainly not an unintelligent people, and we may rest assured that they know much better than we do what is good for them. Indeed, one finds their attitude of strict self-knowledge, their cognizance of their own limitations, and their determination not to allow themselves to stray beyond these boundaries, admirable and praiseworthy. Great in so many other things, the French nation is not less great in having endowed Paris with a soul, and in having understood that, if she is to preserve that soul of simple elegance, of brilliance, of rhythmic charm and grace, she must not be made the howling-ground of the Goth, the Saxon, and the Teuton. Nor can it be justly charged to her that she has been niggardly to the stranger or slow to invite him, whether to serve or to eat, at her table. In this point, indeed, London has not been behind her; but while London, to her shame, allows what might be a stately banquet to degenerate into an ill-ordered scramble of pickpockets, Paris more

wisely ordains that her guests shall feast with her only on her own severe conditions of respect and propriety.

In a word, we must begin to realize, as the French, the Germans, and the Italians have already realized, that all foreign art-products come to a nation, not only as the parents of possible new ideas, but also as the children of an organism that has been moulded to its present complexity and perfection only after centuries of intellectual and emotional struggle. In this struggle we have had almost no share, and it is therefore merely prudent (if nothing else) that we should examine its results narrowly in order to ascertain how much or how little can be of use to us. To do this we must first rid ourselves of our national habit of musical acquiescence: we must guard ourselves against the error of supposing that an art-work can have any absolute or detached existence apart from the nation which produced it: we must therefore be quick to weigh and careful to consider from our own national standpoint any such work that comes to us. In doing this it will be better for us in the long run if we incline to a certain reserve before we offer any such work a complete acceptance. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that every man, English or otherwise, if he fully realizes his nationality, should find—must find—in every foreign art-work something in some part repellent to his own individuality. Nor should fear of tradition or of authority prevent him making that feeling an emphatic part of his nature. This persistence and tenacity of national ideal has, as a matter of history, been the foundation on which all the Continental schools have been set up, and it will only be when we abandon the shifting sands of a foreign culture and

begin to build on the same sure rock that we shall be welcomed with respect into the artistic commonwealth of Europe.

I now come to the third of the three obstacles which I instanced above as probable hindrances to us when we are on the way to our desired end, the personal influence of foreigners. In order to remove the possibility of even the smallest misapprehension, I should say that when I spoke of the "enemies" of English art I used that word solely in an artistic sense and without any intention of attaching a personal or offensive meaning to it. Even the artistic use of the word I should have avoided if it could be shown historically that we have ever been able to assimilate and profit by the foreign culture which necessitates the settlement in our midst of a large number of alien musicians.

In other fields of activity we have shown more than once a marked ability to grasp the principles and even to improve on the technique of foreign craftsmen who have settled here. Such an occasion occurred in the seventeenth century when the French Government revoked the Edict of Nantes and so exiled some of its most industrious citizens. These Huguenots came to England as the foreign musician comes to search for a livelihood. But there the parallel ends, for while the Englishman has never been able to seize the imported musical methods and turn them to his own use, the Londoner and the man of Kent rapidly learnt and perfected the imported principles of silk and cloth weaving and managed to create from them a bulwark, as it were, of a higher level for their own defence against foreign industrial invasion in the next generation.

This marks a distinct difference in the two sorts

of national receptivity and assists us in our study of the actual method by which the blood is kept circulating in the veins of our foreign culture. We have only to walk through a village churchyard in Kent and note the sudden appearance (on the tombstones) of the French names in the seventeenth century and their gradual Anglicizing during the succeeding centuries to realize how completely the Huguenots were absorbed by the people under whose laws they had sheltered. But in the case of foreign musicians we find no such total absorption. It is true that there are, principally in London, a certain (small) number of English-born musicians with strangely foreign names; but it is noteworthy that, though they are often the children of two purely foreign parents, or at most a single generation removed from a purely foreign stock, yet they are, as a rule, more characteristically English in their artistic outlook than their genuinely Anglo-Saxon colleagues.

This striking fact, which is, I believe, a commonplace of sociology to students of immigration in America, shows at once the Englishman's national vigour and his artistic weakness, for while large numbers of foreign musicians who visit this island return eventually to their own countries, the children of those that stay behind as settlers are at once absorbed personally—if I may so put it—by their English surroundings, but the culture which they represent remains unabsorbed by the nation. The consequence of the Englishman's inability to do this is that in the next generation he has no barrier of a higher Anglicized culture behind which he can proceed to develop his own art, and that the cycle of foreign invasion begins all over again.

These conditions are of interest at the present

moment because they imply in our midst the continual presence of a large number of individuals who rely for their existence on their ability to maintain their (superior) foreign culture unabsorbed by us. It is for this reason and no other that I call them our "artistic enemies." They are our enemies in the sense that they fully realize that if once a purely national culture is permitted to develop here, they will be in danger of losing one of their most prized possessions—a market of forty million people. It is, therefore, of the greatest moment to them that no such development should be encouraged or allowed, and to combat this possibility they throw into the scales the weight of very great financial power and large vested interests. It is unnecessary for me to detail the method by which publishers and others bring this pressure into play: it is sufficient to say that its weight, already keenly felt by English musicians in their daily life, will have to be thrown off as soon as the real struggle for national artistic existence begins.

It is, of course, very difficult to coerce an Englishman into any impartial view on this topic. His hereditary peculiarities of temperament forbid it. Every day he feels the pressure of those many points of foreign power which give him a direction in the way of small present personal advantage. Then there is the undoubted fact that the foreigner who finds himself most welcome here is the very man against whose charm of manner and undeniable good-fellowship the Englishman is defenceless. The foreigner soon becomes aware of these two characteristics of the Englishman's temperament—his liking for a little present gain and for a "good fellow," and skilfully uses his knowledge to attack him in his

weakest places. The assault is not unpleasant to the individual Englishman. He is even a little flattered by the easy good-fellowship which is offered him by the distinguished foreign artist or publisher. It is, indeed, almost a religion with him to prefer this good-fellowship to the highest intellectual and moral attainments. We must, therefore, not be surprised if we find him unwilling either to apply a too close logic to the system under which he has to work, or to attempt to get behind its ephemeral conditions and to ascertain the more permanent principles on which it is based.

(4) Material Necessities.

The reader must accept the foregoing paragraphs as a by no means exhaustive account of the difficulties which have to be overcome if ever we are to struggle up to the heights of a national artistic life. I have only indicated three of these difficulties, because I wished to select *types* of the forces which at present exert a constant and steady pull against us. Nor would it be possible, outside the limits of a volume, to show in detail how these forces act, and how, by persistence and tenacity, we may turn them to our own account. That this can be done and must be done I have not the slightest doubt, and signs are not wanting of a conscience slowly awakening to new possibilities. How long this awakening will take no one can say, but we may take courage from our knowledge that, when once the good seed is sown in the magic garden of art, the flower often appears with incredible swiftness. The years that separate Haydn's first symphony from the ninth of Beethoven are fewer than the three score years and ten allotted

by the Psalmist as the span of man's life. But it is not for those who go afield, as it were, with the plough, to more than dream of the glory of the harvest.

In other words, the lesson which we in England need to-day is not the lesson of Beethoven but of Haydn. The former was indeed happy in his inheritance and glorious in the riches which he added to it; but to the latter is the eternal happiness and glory which come to the man who finds the treasure-house empty, and sets his steadfast heart to fill it with the wealth of his art. The parallel between the state of German music in Haydn's youth and the state of music in England to-day is instructive. Bach was not actually dead when Haydn was born, but he was nearing his end, and was recognized as the one great original genius who had given himself solely to the service of German art. We, too, can look back across the centuries to an Englishman whose achievements raise him to a height as exalted in the seventeenth century as Bach was in the eighteenth.

Nor does the parallel end there, for we find here in twentieth century England the same confused turnings, twistings, and gropings of the national mind towards a fuller expression of itself as we find in the German states of the eighteenth century. On all sides there is an earnestness to hear and a quickness to judge; a strange mixture of hopes and disappointments which tells of a dumb nation seeking anxiously, almost feverishly, for some means of speech. This anxiety and fever is often carelessly misinterpreted. "In England," it is said, "there is a market for anything." But if England is waiting for someone who will be to her what Haydn was to

Germany she must first pass through, perhaps is now passing through, a period of intellectuality similar to that which prepared the way for Haydn. In literature she passed unscathed and strengthened through her eighteenth century of pure reason and formalism, and emerged from it to crown herself with the laurels of her nineteenth century poetry.

Is not the same thing possible in music? If it is, that is to say if the national habit of mind permits it, the nation itself must take its music in hand. It is not enough that there is a "market for everything in England." There was a market for everything in Austria when Haydn began his brick-making, but he would never have laid those bricks into the true and enduring foundations of a national palace of art, if there had not been a nation waiting and dreaming of the day when it could enter into that palace.

Haydn died, but Mozart lived; Purcell died, but who lived? In those ten words is the whole difference in nationalism between the Germans and the English. For the responsibility is not to the actual craftsman; it is to the nation which employs the craftsman and enjoins the conditions under which he must work. It is useless to compile lists of composers, good, bad, and indifferent, and to palm their names off on a people as their musical history. We must dig deeper and cut down to the root of the matter. Then we shall recognize that composers do not spring up here and there without cause; we shall see that they are only the expression and interpretation of the national will, and that, when they group themselves into a gradually developing "school," the development is not a merely personal and musical development, but a development in certain fixed directions of the nation itself.

No more lamentable example of this want of fixed national tendency can be found than England, for, if we ask ourselves what men the nation could provide to carry on the torch which had been lit by Purcell, the answer is silence. That composer's "Dido and Aeneas" and Arne's "Artaxerxes" were, in different ways, brilliant and successful works. The former, at any rate, meant as much to England as the "Zauberflöte" or "Don Giovanni" meant to Germany. But where are we to look for the English "Fidelio" and "Freischütz"? Of first-class work there is almost none: of the steady persistence and labour directed generation after generation to one end we have nothing: of the honourable tradition which comes from this intelligent application of labour we have nothing: of the self-sacrificing love of country which makes both this labour and its results possible we have nothing. The church musician alone among all our workers has managed to preserve a sort of tradition, which in an unemotional and inoffensive manner fairly reflects the quiet solemnity and ease of the church.

This is the more interesting to us when we reflect on the isolation of the church from all the other religious forces of the world, and on her indifference for the greater part of the past 250 years to the external objects of England's world-policy. On the other hand, with regard to music in general, it is just that world-policy which has prevented the nation developing along the one line of music, and the proximate cause of that stunted growth can be seen in our inability to assimilate any foreign culture, and to develop from it a national school, for the reason that the very existence of that culture prevents the nation passing through the intellectual and emotional

experiences which it presupposes. In other words, since it is only as a mode of national expression that music can exist, we must, if we wish for a National School of Music, allow the people themselves to pass through these experiences in music of their own choice, and, in doing so, permit them, unhampered by any existent art-products, to fix their own postulates, develop their own methods, and arrive at their own canons of expression.

But in the production of music there are two parties responsible for its perfection or imperfection, the public which demands it and the composer who supplies the demand. Each of them, useless without the other, must be in a certain harmonious relationship before any good result can be looked for. The composer, on his part, must be sufficiently in sympathy with the needs and aspirations of the people to enable him to genuinely express *them* when he is endeavouring only to express *himself*: the public, on the other hand, must be not only passively receptive of his music when it is presented to them, but anxious that such an expression of themselves should exist. This seems to me to be an essential part of the musical contract.

We must remember that no living school of music has ever existed in which there was not an essential unity between the public and its interpreter, the composer. In the past it has often been the practice, and is even now the practice, of English composers to waste their lives vainly beating their wings in the void. The consequence of this is seen when their compositions are thrown down from the heights to an audience which is waiting and craving, not for the rarefied and intellectual ditties of the upper air, but for some song which is racy of its

mother, the earth.[1] In such a case the result is exasperation for the composer and a fit of the sulks for the public, and the reason is the same in both cases—neither understands the other.

It is, however, when we come to deal with the practical side of the question that we find it convenient to view the production of music as being the result of two forces, the public and the composer, for by looking at it in this light we can trace their separate lines of activity and endeavour to suggest methods of employing this force to its greatest advantage. Let us, then, first of all, ask ourselves the question, What is the minimum demand that the operatic composer makes of the public? He demands two things, or rather only one thing—sympathy, that is to say, money. Let us explain this apparent contradiction. It is, of course, obvious that, when a composer is writing his opera, it is on the hypothesis that there are a certain number of people anxious to hear it—any other assumption is pure affectation. As a matter of history, we can see that every operatic composer has always made this assumption, and we must not overlook the fact that, whatever struggles and trials the great German operatic composers had to face, and however small this minimum of public interest had at times been for them, it has actually been there. In other words, they were always able, though often only with great difficulty, to study and perfect their technique by the

[1] "The greatest works which the world has seen have not been dedicated to an unknown posterity, but have been produced to satisfy the daily needs of their age, and have, therefore, of necessity conformed to the tastes, and usually to the fashion and the prejudices, of the period which gave them birth" (Mr. A. J. Balfour's essay on Handel).

only method which could give life and reality to their art, that is to say, by its exercise before theatrical audiences.

There is a general idea among laymen that the art of writing operas—which, as the history of its many failures shows, is a most difficult form of mental activity—can be practised almost at haphazard. It is forgotten that the composer must be as much in touch with the living realities of his art as the naval commander is with his divisions at sea: it is forgotten that an opera is not the book of an opera or even the music of an opera, but a distinct something made up of these two and other things, that its existence is justified only by its success *in the theatre*, and that its educational value for the composer and for the public cannot exist except through the medium of actual physical representation.

We may then say that the first necessity of the composer is that his works shall have a chance of existence according to the conditions which he has designed for them. It is in this sense that we may say that the composer's demand for sympathy is also a demand for money. If he presupposes a public willing to hear his work, he also presupposes a public willing to pass the box-office. I have already said enough with regard to the necessity both of a "spiritual union" between the composer and his audience and of the "accessibility and intelligibility" in the art-work itself. I must, however, point out that the much-derided "logic of the box-office" provides us with our only possible method of making present deductions as to the relative state of the composer and his public, and though into this dialectic many fallacies can be and are introduced, fallacies of boom and advertisement, fallacies of social

prestige and gilt-edged personal ambition, yet in the end these fallacies—though often employed for years to dupe the public—are detected, and the arguments based upon them are refuted by the public itself.

We then have to return to the fact that, putting aside these cruel and iniquitous fallacies, we can only gauge the strength of the "spiritual union" between the composer and his audience from the inside of the box-office. But this presupposes that the doors of the opera-house are open and that the public has an opportunity of showing its approval or disapproval of the composer. It is just at this point that the English composer intervenes. "The doors," he says, "are indeed open wide to the public, but it is nonsense to speak of a public judgment *on me*, for the simple reason that I am never allowed to put my nose inside the stage-door." It is evident that there is an essential something which the composer needs before he can find out whether the public wants him or not. That essential something is Money.

The question for him is, How is this money to be obtained? It is pretty obvious that not one composer in a hundred "has," as the phrase goes, "money of his own," that is to say, not one in a hundred enjoys his legal right of utilizing the labour of others to supply himself with the means of life while he is supplying the world with music. Some few composers have enjoyed this right in the past, and some living composers still enjoy it. But it is very certain that if we restrict the field of musical creation to those who accidentally enjoy this right we are narrowing the area in an artificial and pernicious manner; and that even in this country, where most questions are solved by processes of finance and caste, we shall have to pay the price of

our negligence in a lowered standard and a decreased output.

As a matter of fact, the general total want of opportunity for making money and the corresponding ignorance of the stern necessity of getting it for the sake of his art are the two things most characteristic of the composer in this country. There is almost a humorous side to this, for no one can have failed to hear tales told with bated breath of some successful composer of serious music, who, after perhaps months or even years of strenuous work, followed by weeks of anxious correspondence, has made a sum which any respectable city man would snap up, as a matter of routine, any day before lunch. On the whole, we may say that to the composer money *is not.* But money *is* the essential something which he needs before the public can enjoy the opportunity of paying for his operas at the box-office. Some further mechanism is therefore necessary.

The question is as to what form that mechanism is to take and how it is to be utilized. We may safely put out of our calculations any idea of a return to the eighteenth century system of private patronage as opposed to the spirit of our times. In the past it may have produced beneficial results: it existed in the cases of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner, and it even exists in certain cases here in England to-day. But it has grave drawbacks, especially in a country where caste-feeling is strong. It presupposes in our aristocracy a higher degree of culture than we have reason to suppose they possess; it also presupposes a patriotic direction to this culture. No one can doubt that some such enthusiasm for national art did flourish in the aristocratic circles of

eighteenth century Vienna, and again at the nineteenth century Royal Court of Bavaria; but our own aristocracy in general consecrates its patriotism to strictly material ends connected with self-aggrandizement, and, indeed, in matters of art, has always prided itself on a week-kneed and consumptive cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, our plutocracy —that is to say, our aristocracy of to-morrow—is made up of semi-foreign elements and of that type of Anglo-Saxon whose special developments of commercial activity leave him neither time nor inclination to befriend the artist.

Besides these general objections to a system of private patronage there is also the excessive difficulty of its personal application. The two persons who are to benefit by it—he who provides the money and he who utilizes the money—naturally move in circles that are widely removed from each other, and it requires a great effort and some personal sacrifice on the part of the patron if he is to seek out the artist and put his means at his disposal. And this he must do, for it is very unlikely that the artist, especially the English artist, will be able to face the continual misunderstandings to which he would be exposed if he had to approach the patron. We cannot very well blame a man of spirit for refusing to go round cap in hand, *for the sake of his art*, when once experience has taught him that he will be understood to be holding it out *for himself*. Even when the relationship of patron and patronized has been established it bespeaks on the part of both an unattainable degree of mutual regard and self-forgetfulness. The patron must be endowed with the utmost sympathy and delicacy of mind, and must be always on his guard to keep the index-hand

of benefits-received pointing, as it were, in his own favour, while the artist must be able to save his self-respect by looking only towards the ultimate objects which furnish the reason for their compact.

We have only to reflect on Beethoven's ludicrous and flamboyant attitude of defiance towards his patrons to see how distressing such relationships are apt to become. Indeed, the very fact that private patronage of the eighteenth-century type has almost ceased to exist points the moral that, with the rise of the democracy and the alteration in the social status of the composer,[1] it no longer provides a workable and beneficial scheme.

We must then turn to other sources if we are to find the mechanism necessary for the presentation of operatic works. I have already outlined some of the arguments for and against the expedient of State-aid. In all these arguments it is presumed that a National Opera House would, by its constitution, make adequate provision for the regular performance of English operas, new and old. With regard to the new works this is, however, no more than a pious hope, nor is there any clear evidence to be derived from other examples of State activity in artistic matters that this hope would be fulfilled. Indeed, in some other departments of State control, on which the epithet "National" is bestowed, it has been found necessary to redress the parsimony of the richest nation in the world by the generosity of its private citizens. It must, however, be candidly admitted that difficulties of this sort tend to disappear if we suppose the possibility of a genuine public desire for an adequate National Opera House, and of a sustained public interest which would focus itself

[1] See Wallace's *The Threshold of Music*, p. 166.

on the board of management. We must also suppose an initial constitution for our opera-house, drawn up by musicians who are far-seeing enough to postpone any considerations of immediate personal gain to the vast national benefits which might result from their wise provisions. Such men exist among us, and therefore it is possible for the nation to utilize the mellow wisdom which they unite to an enthusiasm for national art and an unquestioned ability for practical affairs.

With such men as these to lay the foundations of the edifice we need not fear even the professiona politician through whose hands the architectural details would have to pass, for though it is true that one of the most eminent of these politicians has not hesitated to say before an English audience that "when we say music we mean German music," we can at least claim his forbearance on the plea that though "music" may be the same thing to him as "German music," we must make provision for a time when his successors will view the idea of German Opera in possession at Covent Garden in much the same light as he now views the idea of the "Nassau" or the "Westphalen" in dry dock at Portsmouth.

Into the many mutually contradictory deductions that have been made from the Continental custom of subsidizing opera houses I do not intend to go at any length. I may, however, remind the reader of the main argument which is based on this custom. "Wherever there is a School of Opera, there you will find a subsidized Opera House, and therefore," it is contended, "history and the practice of the world show that you cannot have a School of Opera without a subsidized Opera House." The question is then often asked whether France, Italy, and Germany

have produced their schools because they happen to have founded national opera houses or whether they founded the opera houses because they happened to have produced Schools of Opera.

This question, which one has heard gravely debated more than once, can, of course, be easily reduced to the level of that other ingenious question as to which came first, the hen or the egg.[1] For, though it is true that we find subsidized opera houses in all those countries (such as France, Italy, and Germany) which possess National Schools of Opera, yet it is equally true that we find subsidized opera houses in many places (such as Portugal, Servia, and Switzerland) which do not possess National Schools of Opera. We are therefore asked to take one of two views: either that the subsidizing of opera houses in France, Italy, and Germany produced the operas that are played in them (in which case we may shortly expect Portuguese, Servian, and Swiss Schools of Opera), or that the writing of the operas by French, German, and Italian composers produced the necessity of subsidized opera houses in which to play them (in which case we may expect that a more minute examination would reveal to us the actual existence of Portuguese, Servian, and Swiss Schools of Opera!)[2]

Of course this Gilbertian logic contains within itself at least two fatal fallacies. If we grant, on the

[1] Or that unfathomable musico-national mystery whether Welshmen engage in the milk trade because they have fine voices or have fine voices because they engage in the milk trade.

[2] The municipality of Saigon (Cochin-China) subsidizes an opera house. The performances are said to be excellent, and often attended by the natives, but it is unlikely that we shall ever hear of a Cochin-Chinese School of Opera.

one hand, that the mere subsidizing of opera houses is a necessary preliminary to the writing of operas, it is plain that there must be in every case many other necessary preliminaries, such as those of race, climate, geographical and political condition which may be absent in the cases of Portugal, Servia, or Switzerland. Again, if we grant that the writing of operas produces the necessity of subsidized houses in which to play them, it is equally plain that this artistic activity is not the only cause which can call into existence such houses, for we know, as a matter of fact, that Portugal, Servia, and Switzerland have no Schools of Opera and yet possess subsidized houses.

With this question of the connection that exists between the production of the opera and the subsidizing of the opera house we shall perhaps deal fairly if we quote it as an example of what is called in logic an "inseparable accident," like the blackness of crows. Unfortunately, as we can see at South Kensington, crows are occasionally white, and it is just on this point that some difficulty arises when we come to apply the Continental logic to our English conditions. For, as a reference to any musical dictionary will show, England has produced Opera continually. On the other hand, though to any wealthy nation the subsidizing of a National Opera House is a matter of comparative ease, she alone among such nations has not done so. It is when we consider this fact and the fact that all our activities—social, political, intellectual, and emotional—have differed widely from similar Continental activities that we feel the necessity of considering whether we may not be the "white crow" in this international argument.

On this point I offer an opinion only with the

utmost diffidence and with the very full consciousness that, in the present state of utter stagnation, any change which gives our composers a chance of doing good work is a change for the better. In that sense my view is that the meanest house of wood and wattles, provided it were set up with the conscious determination that it should benefit English art, would be an advance on Covent Garden and all the money that supports it.

This is, however, a financial matter which may easily be taken too deep. In the chapter which Sir Charles Stanford[1] has devoted to the study of State aid, he says, "The principle is either good or bad, and if it is bad for our country it is equally bad for other countries"; but laying aside the possibility that in a nest of black crows there may be one white crow who wants a different diet, we may fairly ask, is it a "principle" at all? Surely it is a mere matter of expediency, and if there is any "principle" about it, the principle is that *money must be supplied somehow to support Opera.* This does not, of course, get us very much further forward, though we must remember that almost no efforts have been made to procure this money from sources other than those of the State or of the Municipality.

Many other sources exist, and the generosity of the British public in supporting all forms of social enterprise has come to be regarded as a proverb. To describe one-tenth of the objects good, bad, and indifferent to which wealthy people dedicate their wealth by subscription or bequest would take a larger volume than I am now writing. Either as individuals or as societies they maintain our hospitals and our missions, and in great part our church; they

[1] In his *Studies and Memories*, p. 10.

provide funds for the "unsuccessful" of many professions; they educate orphans; they organize our charity; they make life pleasanter for us by providing us with additional curates and by suppressing the trade in opium; they distribute Bibles, trusses, and cattle-troughs; they aid the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the halt; they show us how to emigrate, if we wish to; they look after our birds, our lost dogs, our historical beauty spots, and our Asiatic strangers; they prevent cruelty to children and to animals; they promote Christian knowledge for ourselves and for the Jews; they discourage inebriety; they encourage the observance of the Lord's Day both by the opening and the shutting of museums; they give our poor (and rich) the opportunity of being educated in the principles of the Established Church and many other churches; they protect and help young girls, sea fishermen, spooks, and epileptics; they control abuses in advertizing and in the burning of coal; they help us not to gamble or to be slaves or to be vaccinated.

When we consider that this formidable list might easily be made five times as long, and that most "Societies for the Encouragement of" X, Y, and Z presuppose the existence of other "Societies for the Abolition or Suppression" of the same X, Y, Z, we get an idea of the sincere and whole-hearted generosity with which the British public backs its enthusiasms. But the point that interests us is that in all this vast scheme of national generosity the word "Opera" is not once mentioned. Considering the infinite variety of the channels through which the stream of public munificence flows, we might well have indulged ourselves with the hope that some individual or Society existed to "propagate" or "encourage" national

Opera. We might, indeed, in our chagrin at this total indifference, have almost welcomed a society for its "prevention," "suppression," or "total abolition." But we are denied even this tepid pleasure, and we have to face the solid fact that, in spite of the talk and surface enthusiasm of years, no single living soul of all the many rich and super-rich produced by our social system is now ready to put down a shilling-piece for national English Opera.

I do not doubt for a moment that if any of the rich amateurs whose pleasure it is to control the destinies of music in London were to devote an hour to the subject they would see its urgent necessities. Let them attempt to reconstitute *in their own businesses* the conditions which the English operatic composer has to face in his. Let them consider before they blame the English composer—as I have heard him blamed—what their own prosperity would be if they attempted to start a new and hazardous commercial enterprise without capital, without credit, without even an office. What would they think if they were required to conceive and execute great plans when the only great plan possible was the plan to keep alive. Approach any one of these gentlemen, whose dilettante views as to the severance between capital and energy only begin to assert themselves after four o'clock, with a "proposition," be it oil in California, timber in Oregon, or fish in British Columbia. Does he not know at once that there are two questions to be answered—first, is the "proposition" a good one? and, second, where is the money to come from?

And these are exactly the two questions which are contained in the English operatic problem, for the answer to the query as to which came first, the hen

or the egg, is, in this case, Both. That it is useless to put up so many thousand pounds' worth of bricks and mortar the music-hall performance to-night in Cambridge Circus testifies ; that it is just as useless to expect English composers to found a School of Opera by wandering about the slums of Covent Garden with their scores under their arms the "Grand" season bears undeniable witness.

In studying this question we must make up our mind to disregard all those fatuous prophecies which are regularly croaked out as soon as the words "English Opera" are mentioned, and for this very simple reason, that the matter has never been put fairly to the test. No one has ever yet come forward equipped with both the money and the single-eyed determination to offer the Englishman a material basis on which he can erect his artistic structures. It is true that, at long intervals, individual composers have secured isolated performances of their operas ; it is true that publishers have occasionally—and, be it said, with the greatest generosity—offered sums of money and performances as prizes to English composers ; it is true that singers, impresarios, conductors, and others have from time to time mounted English operas and operas in English, either from a genuine desire to further the cause of English music or from mere motives of personal gain and ambition ; but in all the vast mass of private beneficence to which I have alluded above, and in all the infinite searchings after good ends which this beneficence presupposes, there is not one instance of money devoted with a single eye to this object.

From this, indeed, we may, in a manner, take courage, for the battle cannot be said to be lost

before it is begun. In other departments of music the battle has begun, and we can note very evident signs that those who are able to help the composer are not ignorant of his wants. The institution of the Patron's Fund by Mr. Ernest Palmer is a landmark in private musical philanthropy. By the terms of this fund he placed at the disposal of the patron—His Majesty the King—a large sum of money to be devoted in various ways to the encouragement of young British musicians, and it is satisfactory to note a general agreement as to the far-seeing wisdom and nobility of purpose which inspired the founder's generosity.

Of Mr. Joseph Beecham's larger (but more cosmopolitan) enterprises I have little to say here, as the energies of his wealth are not primarily devoted to the object which I am discussing. The method which he has adopted of placing his resources at the disposal of one man—in this case his son—seems to me to be peculiarly sound and admirable. It recognizes the cardinal truth that, in this country at any rate, a Board of Management depends in the long run on one man for its momentum, and, by doing away with the other members of the Board, it utilizes to the full the initiative, the resource, and the business capacity of this one man, and, at the same time, gets rid of the uncertainty of purpose which is usually inseparable from artistic committees. Thus the objects of his enterprise—whatever they may be—are probably attained with a minimum of confusion.

Indeed, I can imagine no scheme better fitted to cope with the stringent necessities of English Opera than the one-man-and-one-financier scheme of Mr. Joseph Beecham, and it is to be hoped that some one of our very rich men may be inspired by his example

to grasp the possibilities of the situation, and to "acquire merit" by assisting to realize these possibilities. Such a man must come into the field armed not only with money, but with the *belief* without which the mountains cannot be removed. He must have a single eye to the one great object, and the achievement of that object must be his reward; he must have no ulterior ends of title or advertisement; he must hope for neither present gratitude nor monetary profit; he must leave out of his plans all ideas of advancing, except incidentally, the interests of individual singers and composers; he must expect to start, not with the tidal wave of a boom, but with the quiet persistence of effort which, like the lapping of water, wears away the live rock.

The actual amount of money which he would have to find would be large, but, compared with some of our present-day operatic enterprises, or with any modern commercial undertaking, very small. Suppose the money found, there would be no idea of running a huge succession of operas pell-mell, night after night. The first thing to do would be to find the operas. Perhaps they are not written. In that case nothing is to be gained by sitting down and lamenting the fact, for the men must be found who can write them, and it must be made possible for them to do so. The difficulties in the way of doing this may seem overwhelming to the layman unacquainted with the personnel of our artistic life. As a matter of fact, though it has never been attempted, nothing could be simpler. We have plenty of fine musicians, some of them men of high ideals, who have been familiar with the theatre from childhood. Such men would be a glory to our stage if they were given the opportunity of producing good work. At

present they are engaged in doing very different and less important things, and the sum of money which, wisely and sympathetically expended, would put an end to this state of affairs would be a very small one, for composers, unlike jockeys, publicans, and some other really useful members of the community, have no wide-stretched ideas on the subject of personal gain. Indeed, the amount of money that is paid away in six months, not to the singers, but to the stage-hands of a large opera house, would, if applied in the way that I have suggested, do more good to English Opera than all the casual performances of the last twenty-five years.

The preliminary expenditure of money may, of course, be made in many ways, but in no way more profitably than in the provision of "books," whose level of dramatic and poetical interest will be high enough to attract the attention of the most promising composers. There are a dozen such men in London alone, who are "on the look-out for a good book," which, needless to say, will not, except by the merest accident, drop from the clouds into their field of vision.

This universal difficulty in finding a subject to write on is a commonplace in the lamentations of the musical Jeremiah, and on this topic the composers themselves are generally divided up into three groups. We have, first, the large majority of composers who, concentrating their attention solely on the musical side of their art, allow their eagerness for musical expression to trip up their dramatic judgment. This culpable neglect of one half of their art partly explains the existence of that vast wreckage whose fragments are strewn far and wide along the shores of Operatic history. A composer of this type is generally gifted with a genuine but indiscriminate craving for thea-

trical expression, and this want of discrimination has resulted, abroad, in the production of such works of mingled genius and idiocy as the "Zauberflöte" and "Euryanthe."

A second type is found in those few composers whose inflexibility of mind prevents them seeing that the end of playing is to hold the mirror up to nature. This aloofness of mind, perhaps caused in part by an over-sensibility to the actual physical associations of the stage, invariably produces an obliquity of artistic vision. The composer forgets that these associations are neither integral nor peculiar to the stage, and he is liable to be forced into an attitude which, as a close examination will show, itself contributes to a degradation worse than the one against which it protests. For the artist, refusing to the stage what he grants to literature and painting, degrades it from the high place which it should occupy as the universal expression of human nature to the level of a tub on which he can stand to preach whatever moral doctrine he wishes. Of this diabolically well-intentioned perversity, no better examples can be given than Beethoven and Mendelssohn, of whom the former could only persuade his genius to illustrate one topic on the stage —that of wifely devotion—while the latter, though full of earnest intentions, was prevented by the ultra-refinement of his nature from ever galvanizing them into life.[1]

Of the third type of composer—him who wishes, like Wagner, to take up the burden as it was laid

[1] For the extraordinary persistence with which Mendelssohn clung to the idea of "getting an Opera book," and the accompanying fastidiousness of mind that always made him reject what was offered, see Grove's article "Mendelssohn" in the *Dictionary*. Schumann had much the same difficulty.

down in ancient Greece, and to be himself the maker of the whole artistic structure—drama, words, and music—I need say little. In his hands is undoubtedly the music-drama of the future, but the accidental conjunction of so many abilities in one mind can occur but rarely, and the processes of such a mind cannot receive much help from any external organization.

It is rather to the first of these classes of operatic composers that I wish to draw attention, for it is just this class of intellect that can be benefited and saved from disappointment by sympathetic direction. We must remember that, though the difficulty of securing a good opera-book has become a hackneyed bye-word, almost no attempt has been made to solve this difficulty in the composer's interest. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, composers inherited opera-books in exactly the same way as their forefathers, in the sixteenth, inherited Canti Fermi, and in consequence the drama itself—that is to say, the principal part of the opera—ran on lines as stereotyped as that of a chess-board. From this, among other causes, came the tendency to deny the "drama" its proper share in the opera, and one of its worst effects is seen in the unjustly low status which the "librettist" has come to occupy in comparison with that of the composer.

The result of this can be seen in all our early nineteenth century Opera. At that time it was the custom for a composer of distinction to approach a litterateur of no distinction and to invite him to supply a "book."[1] The terms offered generally left him in

[1] Even at the present day Verdi's collaboration with Boito (late in the nineteenth century) is always referred to as an almost divinely ordained inspiration on the part of the composer.

no doubt as to his status in the bargain and, of course, deprived him of any interest in the work as a whole. The consequences of this sort of collaboration can be gauged by merely checking off on one's fingers the operas of acknowleged *musical* merit which have failed because of their dramatic incoherence, and even in some successful operas one feels that they have succeeded in spite of their books. Of our own English opera-books I have already said something in an earlier chapter. At the beginning of the nineteenth century their artistic level fell inconceivably low, and it is mere flattery to say that their relationship to poetry was that of a third-form boy's hexameters to the "Georgics": and to drama that of a nigger-minstrel's patter to "Othello." To be believed they must be read, and it is only by reading them that one can gain an idea of the benefits which will result when composers are given access to work of a different calibre.

There are already signs that musicians are beginning to realize their grave disadvantages in this respect. Some are making use of their literary talent and experience of the stage to produce operas of their own complete making:[1] others are applying an increased power of dramatic and poetical criticism to the books which are submitted to them. But, while it is easy for a musician of taste to criticize, it is certain that this alone will not suffice to link up his energies with those of the dramatist. The problem, then, is to effect this union, and its solution only appears difficult because, up to the present, it has been left to the mere accident of personal acquaintance. The success of such an experiment will naturally depend on the care with which the composers

[1] *E.g.* Mr. Clutsam's "A Summer Night."

are selected and the sincerity of the efforts that are made to provide them with inspiring material. The qualities of tact, patience, and perseverance are put into play as a matter of routine in engaging singers, in fitting them with congenial parts, and in the elaboration of all the orchestral and scenic details of an opera house. There can be no reason why they should not have the same good effect when they are applied to the solution of a problem of at least equal importance.

It is impossible for me to more than hint at the many questions of detail which arise, when we imagine our operas completed. On this point I presuppose that a composer who had been selected to furnish an opera would be relieved from, at any rate, a portion of his normal—it should be abnormal musical activities, so that he could bring to his work a mind unhampered by daily financial worries. Without such relief his work will only show, as it invariably now shows, that it is a mere nervous interlude hurriedly interpolated into his more pressing engagements as executant, conductor, teacher, or arranger. A composer who is thus freed from mental anxiety and heartened by the prospect of a public performance would give of his best. We should, indeed, have to be patient in waiting for results, perhaps for a year or two, but the good results would come in time to justify our patience.

The question of the selection of composers and operas offers great difficulty, especially in view of the lamentable results shown in the selection of some prize operas. I think we may take it for granted that the man to judge the merits of a music drama is not the man who is solely a musician. More especially he should not be a man whose activities

remove him, however slightly, from popular sympathies. After all, it is the public who has to say "Yes" or "No" to an opera in the long run. And, therefore, it is better to leave the selection to some specialist who—if he cannot in every case say "The public wants this"—can in most cases say with confidence "The public does not want that."

I suppose that nine persons out of every ten will say that this involves a disastrous "lowering of the standard." But, apart from the fact that no standard *can* exist except that set by popular appreciation, I must point out that we have at present *no standard at all*, and that, therefore, even the smallest possible standard is, for us, an advance. And it is not only an advance, it is a foundation for us to build on in the future, and, provided the foundation is laid, not with envy and malice, but with hope and strength, it does not matter one jot or tittle how it is laid. We may be for the moment lowering our standard in comparison with the standards of foreign architecture, but we are raising *actual buildings* by which we can form and perfect our standards in the future.

Before closing this very hasty and imperfect sketch I must say a few words on the much debated question of "the run." In this matter London, owing to its size, is scarcely comparable to any Continental city, and it is therefore impossible to deduce from Continental practice any rules which would be of service here. The question has been asked,[1] "Who would want to hear even *Don Giovanni* every night for three months?" Of course no *individual person* would want to do so, but arithmetic tells us that three months of "Don Giovanni" bears much the same relationship to London's population as half a dozen

[1] *Studies and Memories*, Sir Charles V. Stanford.

performances does to that of a little German town of half a million inhabitants. Indeed, if London ever wants to hear an opera, in the way that it wanted to hear "Hänsel and Gretel" on its first production, I do not see how the "fatal principle of the run" is to be avoided, unless one is prepared to draw an artificial line and to restrict the right of seeing the opera to a minority. At present, however, this has only an academic interest.

There are many other points of selection, finance, and production which offer themselves as tempting subjects for study. I have, however, rigidly excluded from these paragraphs all questions of detail because all such questions can be answered by an application of the ordinary methods of organization. The desiderata that lie behind and must precede them are, first, the consciousness of our failure in the past, and second, the sturdy belief that it is only by abandoning our old sterile methods and by searching out some "spiritual union" with our countrymen that we can hope to found a true School of National Opera. These two convictions must be fixed in our minds and hearts before we can proceed to put into fruitful service any mechanism which may be devised to help us towards our goal.

The mechanism itself calls, first, for patriotism and generosity in supplying the necessary money, and second, for the knowledge and sympathy without which its proper application is impossible. Neither the money nor the good-will to apply it can be of the least use without the other. The benefit to our art of a wise prevision in the application of such funds would be incalculable, and in a country where every form of good and hopeful work and not a few forms of the most extravagant faddism meet with support

from poor and rich alike, it is surely not too much to look forward to the day when Opera will no longer be allowed to stand alone in its present isolated pre-eminence as a matter of national unconcern.

Till that day arrives the English operatic composer must remain silent. He cannot turn for inspiration, as he should turn, to the magic of his atmosphere, the infinite variety of his scenery, his woodland-ways and sweetly running waters, the noble silent spaces of his great downs, his countryside and its cottages that hold his folk-lore, the little happinesses of his home, the drawn curtains and the blazing fire; the heavy magnificence that glows through his slowly moving dreams of Eastern Empire, the august procession of his saints and heroes passing through his imagination like an army of torchmen; even the sea itself that is at his feet winter and summer calling aloud for an expression which it has never yet known. All this noble inheritance which he should be able to join, in his drama, to the passions of men and women, must remain for him a thing only to be remembered, not revealed.

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The more particular topic of English Opera and English Operatic conditions has, of course, a much less extensive literature, and the following is, I believe, a first attempt to furnish a bibliography. English Operatic history and the general literature of the English stage are, especially in the eighteenth century, mixed up with one another, and in many cases the dates and details of operatic productions have to be sought in contemporary newspaper advertisements and criticisms, in playhouse guides, and in collections of play-bills, such as that of the Hon. Sidney Carr Glyn in the British Museum. I have only indicated one or two of the best-known sources of information on the subject of our early masques.

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(Contains interesting discussions on English Opera.)

FITZGERALD, PERCY: *The Savoy Opera and the Savoyards.* London, 1899.

(A chatty record of the Savoy comic operas down to 1894.)

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(Chapters II., III., VIII., X.)

FULLER-MAITLAND, J. A.: "*Henry Purcell*" *in the* "*Rivista Musicale Italiana.*" Vol. II., Part i. 1895.

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GALLOWAY, M.P., W. J.: *The Operatic Problem.* London, 1902.

(Contains a statement of the problem and studies of its solution in Italy, France, and Germany. There are two important chapters, one on "The English National Opera House" and the other on "Opera for the People." The book is largely concerned with the commercial and financial sides of the question.)

GALLOWAY, LORD: *See* Stewart, John.

GILLILAND, THOMAS: *Elbow Room.* A Pamphlet containing remarks on the shameful increase of the private boxes of Covent Garden, with a variety of original observations relating to the Management of that Theatre. Also a comparative View of the Two Houses, shewing the puerility of a *great man's* Prophecy, who was to have turned Drury Lane Theatre into a "Splendid Desert," &c., &c. London, 1804.

(A protest against Kemble's restriction of the seating accommodation in the cheaper parts of the house and his introduction of an extra tier of private boxes.)

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(A discussion of Operatic History and Principles grouped round the names of Wagner, Puccini, Strauss, and Debussy. Partly new, partly reprinted from "Harper's," "The North American Review," and "The Musician.")

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(Naldi, after being refused an engagement at the Opera by Taylor, had gone to Greville and with his aid set up a "Burletta Theatre" which was a disastrous failure. This gives the history of the quarrel that resulted. For the other side of the question see Naldi, "The Alien" &c.)

GROVE'S *Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* 2nd Ed. Edited by J. A. Fuller-Maitland. London, 1904-1910.

(*See* sub "Opera" and "English Opera.")

GRUNEISEN, F.R.G.S., C. L.: *The Opera and the Press.* London, 1869.

(On Opera management, and especially on the author's quarrels with Gye. The correspondence is given.)

GUERBER, HÉLÈNE ADELINE: *Stories of Famous Operas.* With illustrations. New York, 1897.

(Sketches of 15 Italian, French, and German opera-plots.)

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Handel et son Temps. Published by "La France musicale." Paris, 1862.

(Chaps. I.-IV. and the beginning of Chap. V. only published. *See* Schœlcher, Collection.)

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(The well-known unpublished collection of cuttings from newspapers and magazines, with plates, MSS. notes and transcriptions made by J. H. Continued from 1820 till the end of 1837 by J. R. Smith. The earliest entry refers to 1521. In 9 vols. British Museum, 11791, dd. 18.)

HAWKINS, SIR JOHN: *A general History of the Science and Practice of Music.*

(Book XII., Chapter CVIII. and onwards.)

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HEATH, CHARLES: *Beauties of the Opera and Ballet.* London.

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HENDERSON, W. J.: *How Music developed.* New York, 1898.

(Chapter XVIII. onwards gives a general description of the development of Opera.)

HIBBS, REV. RICHARD: *See* Clericus, M.A.

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(*See* "Memoirs of the Opera" by the same author.)

HOGARTH, GEORGE: *Memoirs of the Opera in Italy, France, Germany, and England.* 2 vols. London, 1851.

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(General operatic reminiscences of many parts of Europe, with anecdotes "political, literary and musical." Written by Theodore Hook from materials furnished by Kelly.)

KREHBIEL, H. E.: *Chapters of Opera.* 2nd Ed. New York, 1909.

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LAHEE, HENRY C.: *Grand Opera in America.* Boston, 1902.

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(Includes "Comedies, Tragedies, Pastorals, Masques, Farces, and Operas in the English tongue." Pp. 556.)

LAWRENCE, ARTHUR: *Sir Arthur Sullivan.* With critique by B. W. Findon and Bibliography by Wilfrid Bendall. London, 1899.

(Contains interesting discussions on English Opera.)

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(A general sketch of European Opera with musical and other illustrations. Chapters X. and XV. are more particularly devoted to English Opera. There are five appendices, of which three give lists of operatic terms, composers, singers, conductors and orchestras of various periods. Appendix B has a valuable table of "Financial Aid granted to Operatic Schemes from State or Municipal Funds," while Appendix E contains an incomplete English Bibliography of Opera (22 entries).)

LE TEXIER: *Ideas on the Opera.* London, 1790.

(Short essays on all that concerned Opera at that time. The headings are "The Choice of Subject—The Composition—The Singing and Declamation—The Ballets—The Decorations—The Dresses—The Administration." The question of finance is dealt with.)

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(Lumley's account of his quarrel with his former patron, "Lord Ward," afterwards Earl of Dudley.)

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("An historical and critical elucidation of the Opera" written as a supplement to Count Algarotti's essay, q.v. Chapters XII. and XIII. are devoted to a comparison between operatic conditions in Italy and England and to a description of the "introduction and progress of Italian Operas in England.")

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(*See* below, "State of the case in regard to the Point of Dispute, A.")

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(Vol. I. Chap. XII. "The National Opera House," an account of Mapleson's unsuccessful attempt to found an Opera-house on the Victoria Embankment in 1875.)

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(A further enlarged and revised version of the same author's "Popular History of Music" and "Manual of Musical History." Chapter VI. "The origin of the Opera and Oratorio"; Chapter X. "The rise of Opera and Oratorio in England.")

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(Naldi's account of his quarrel with Greville. Written "under the disagreeable necessity of shewing the Public that it is not *boasted birth* and ... *high family* connexion ... that

always constitutes the gentleman and man of honour,—but a *beauty and perfection of principle*, familiar to all... under the *common* name of *honesty*." *See* Greville, H. F.)

NAGEL, WILIBALD: *Geschichte der Musik in England.* In two parts. Strassburg, 1894 and 1897.

(Nothing later than Purcell.)

NEEDHAM, MRS.: *See* CLAYTON, Miss E. C.

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(Contains many scattered references to performances of English Opera in England and Ireland.)

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(A burlesque poem on a squabble between Mr. B—d—d and Lady Jersey for an opera box. Gives a highly-coloured picture of the Italian Opera in the days of Allegranti and Pacchierotti.)

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OULTON, W. C.: *History of the English Theatres in London*: containing an annual register of all the new and revised Tragedies, Comedies, Operas, Farces, Pantomimes etc. that have been performed at the Theatres-Royal in London from the years 1771-1795. With occasional notes and anecdotes. London, 1796.

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Oxford History of Music, The.

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Pandolpho attonito. *See* Stewart, John, 7th Earl of Galloway.

PARKE, W. T.: *Musical Memoirs.* 2 vols. London, 1830.

(Gives a general view of musical and stage life from "the first commemoration of Handel in 1784 to the year 1830.")

PHILLIPS, HENRY: *Musical and Personal Recollections during Half a Century.* 2 vols. London, 1864.

(By the well-known operatic baritone. Contains many scattered anecdotes, criticisms, etc., of English Opera in the first half of the 19th century.)

Play-House Scuffle, The; *or, Passive Obedience Kickt off the Stage.* Being a true Relation of a New Tragi-Comedy, As it was acted last week at the *Play-House* in *Drury-Lane*; by several *Notorious* ACTORS, frequently call'd *Her Majesties Servants*, but of late Turn'd *Their Own Masters.* In Two Cantos. London, 1710.

(A rhymed account "of ye Quarrel between Mr. Rich ye Master and ye Players.")

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RAGUENET, THE ABBÉ: *A Comparison between the* French *and* Italian *Musick and Opera's ... to which is added A Critical Discourse upon Operas in* England, *and a Means proposed for their improvement.* London, 1709.

(By a vivacious and enthusiastic lover of Italian Opera. Gives some startling information as to methods of operatic composition at that time.)

Remarkable Trial of the Queen of Quavers, The. London, 1777-1778.

(A satire on the Opera.)

RIEMANN, HUGO: *Opern-Handbuch.* Leipzig, 1887.

(A dictionary of European Opera under both titles and composers' names. Dates and places of first productions and of some revivals are given. Pp. 743. *N.B.*—Pages 747-862 are devoted to a "Repertorium der dramatisch-musikalischen Litteratur (Opern, Operetten, Balette, Melodramen, Pantomimen, Oratorien, dramatische Kantaten, u.s.w.)" by Riemann in collaboration with Franz Stieger.)

Roscius Anglicanus, or, an Historical review of the Stage after it had been suppress'd by means of the late Unhappy Civil War, begun in 1641, *'till the time of Charles IId's Restoration in May* 1660. With additions by the late Mr. Thomas Davies, Author of the life of Garrick. London, 1789.

(Contains a few references to English Operas, especially to Court-productions of Purcell's works, such as "King Arthur," "Dioclesian," "The Fairy Queen.")

SACHS, E. O., and WOODROW, A. E.: *Modern Opera Houses and Theatres.* 3 vols. London, 1896-1898.

(Examples selected from playhouses recently erected in Europe, with descriptive text, a treatise on theatre planning and construction, and supplements on stage machinery, theatre fires, and protective legislation, etc.)

SCHŒLCHER: *Collection.*

(A collection of books, MSS., etc., made by Schœlcher with special reference to Handel and 18th century music in England. Has been in the library of the Conservatoire at Paris since 1873.)

SIMCOE, H. AUGUSTINE: *Sullivan v. Critic.* London, 1906.

SQUIRE, W. BARCLAY: *Purcell's Dramatic Music.*

(In Vol. V. of "Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft.")

STAFFORD, W. C.: *A History of Music.* Edinburgh, 1830.

(Chapters XX. to XXIII. are devoted to England, and Chapters XXI. and XXII. deal with the establishment and progress of Opera in England.)

STANFORD, SIR CHARLES VILLIERS: *Studies and Memories.* London, 1908.

(Chapter I. is devoted to "The case for National Opera." The text of the Memorial to the London County Council on this topic is reprinted at the end of the volume.)

State of the case in regard to the Point in Dispute between Mr. Mosse and Mr. Sheridan, A. With Appendix. Dublin, 1750.

(This pamphlet and the pamphlet "The Man of Honour, but not of his word" (see above) make up 61 pages of printed squabble as to whether a theatre band should be lent to perform at "The New Garden, Great Britain Street ...for the benefit of the Lying-in Hospital"! The Sheridan is Thomas Sheridan.)

STEWART, JOHN, 7TH EARL OF GALLOWAY. *Pandolfo Attonito! or Lord Galloway's Poetical Lamentation on the Removal of the Arm-Chairs from the Pit at the Opera House.* With a preface and some remarks by the Editor. London, 1800.

(By T. J. Mathias. Printed originally in the *Morning Herald* of May 1, 1800. A burlesque poem accompanied and illustrated by a good deal of faded "18th Century" topical humour in English and Italian. The Argument is as follows: "A month or two ago, Lord Galloway came to the Opera, and on the Pit-door near the Orchestra being opened, he perceived, to his confusion and astonishment, that a long Bench was substituted in the place of the ROW of ARM-CHAIRS at the bottom of the Pit, the principal or central of which he had filled for so many nights with discernment and dignity, and to the general satisfaction of every person present. His Lordship, conceiving, rather hastily, that this measure was intended as a personal slight to himself, retired disconcerted, without taking his seat; and, as he is a votary of the Muses, penned the following Lamentation which he sent to Lord Salisbury the next day, and recovered his wonted good humour, cheerfulness and, gayety.")

STIEGER, FRANZ: *See* Riemann, Hugo.

STREATFIELD, R. A.: *Modern Music and Musicians.* London, 1906.

(Chap. III. "The Secularisation of Music"; Chap. IV. "Purcell"; and scattered references throughout.)

STREATFIELD, R. A.: *The Opera.* A sketch of the Development of Opera. With full descriptions of all works in the Modern Repertory. New Edition. London and Philadelphia, 1902.

(Contains also a valuable introduction by J. A. Fuller-Maitland and an index of 400 Operas, of which 42 are English.)

SULLIVAN: *See* Wyndham, Henry Saxe; Lawrence, Arthur; Findon, B. W.

TAYLOR, W.: *A concise statement of transactions and circumstances respecting The King's Theatre in the Haymarket by Mr. Taylor the proprietor together with the official correspondence upon the same subject between the Rt. Hon. The Lord Chamberlain and Earl Cholmondeley &c.* London, 1791.

TOWERS, JOHN: *Dictionary-Catalogue of* 28,015 *Operas and Operettas which have been performed on the Public Stage.* Morgantown, W. Va. Copyrighted 1910.

(Contains for the first time (?) names of American composers and lists of their Operas.)

UPTON, GEORGE P.: *The Standard Operas, Their Plots, Their Music, and Their Composers.* London, 1907.

(Gives plots and criticisms of 137 Operas of all countries in alphabetical order. There is an appendix which mentions one or two little-known 18th century American Operas and which gives the names of 135 American Operas of all periods down to the present day.)

VICTOR, BENJAMIN: *The history of the theatres of London and Dublin from the year* 1730 *to the present time.* To which is added an annual register of all the Plays performed at the Theatres Royal in London from the year 1712, with occasional notes and anecdotes. 3 vols. London, 1761-1771.

Voice of discord, The; or The Battle of the fiddles. London, 1753.

("A history of a seditious and unnatural attempt (contained in a pamphlet entitled "A scheme for having in London an Italian Opera of a new taste") upon the lives and properties of fifty singers and fiddlers." This is the history of an intrigue resulting from the proposal of "Van-schi" to give a winter season of Opera at the Haymarket "with all the most celebrated Eunuchs Italy could boast of." For this purpose he had raised 2000 guineas from "The English Nobility whose peculiar character it is to be blindly generous." The history of this squabble is given in French and English, and there is a humorous Italian dedication.)

WALKER, ERNEST: *A History of Music in England.* Oxford, 1907.

(Contains scattered references to English Opera. *See* General Index, sub "Operas" and "Stage Music.")

WATERS, E.: *A Statement of Matters relative to The King's Theatre.* 2nd Ed. London, 1818.

(Correspondence and particulars relating to a "noble Committee" of enquiry into Waters's management, his engaging and paying of singers and dancers.)

WATERS, E.: *The Opera Glass,* by E. Waters Esq. Sole executor of Mr. Francis Goold, and principal Mortgagee of Mr. Taylor's Share in the King's Theatre. London, 1808.

(One hundred and fifty pages of an operatic manager's correspondence, quarrels, and finance. He estimates Madame Catalani to have received "last year" the sum of £16,700 "besides presents.")

WYNDHAM, HENRY SAXE: *Arthur Sullivan.* London, 1903.

(A short illustrated account of Sullivan's life and work. There is a chapter on "Sullivan as Composer" by Ernest Ford.)

WYNDHAM, HENRY SAXE: *The Annals of Covent Garden Theatre from* 1732 *to* 1897. London, 1906.

WOODROW, A. E.: *See* Sachs, E. O.

YOUNG, M. J.: *Memoirs of Mrs. Crouch.* Including a Retrospect of the stage during the years she performed. London, 1806.

(Theatrical and operatic reminiscences of the late 18th century.)

ZEDLITZ, BARONESS VON: *See* Arditi, Luigi.

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NOTE.—In this index operatic titles which begin with the word *the* appear under T.

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